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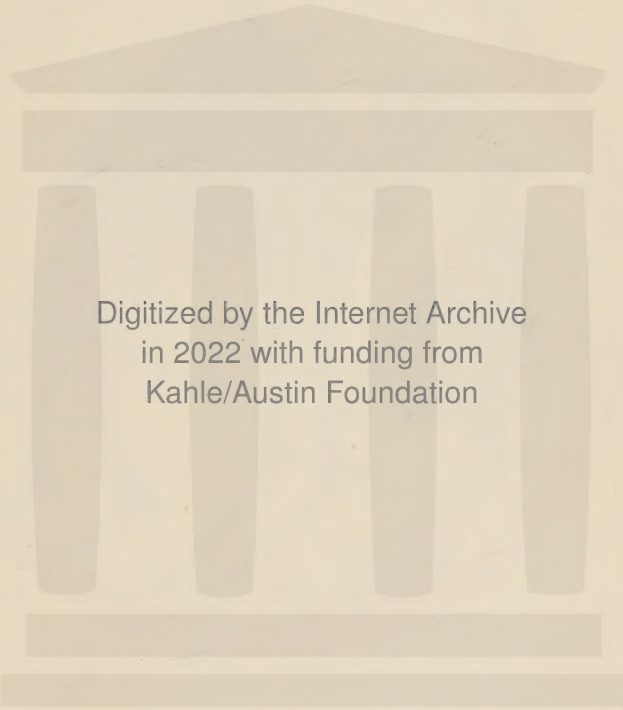
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FAVORITE BIBLE STORIES





In the Sunny Meadows with His Lambs
[From Story "David and His Music"]

FAVORITE BIBLE STORIES

RETOLD FOR CHILDREN
BY
A. GERTRUDE KROTTJER



PICTURES BY
JOSEPH EUGENE DASH

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Chicago

U. S. A.

Fourth Printing, 1931

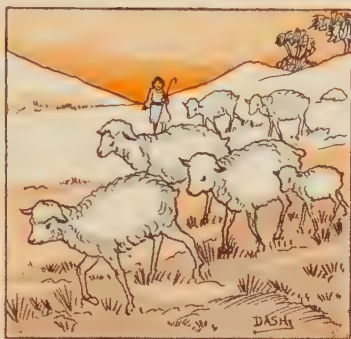


On Joseph's twelfth birthday his father gave him a beautiful coat.

A "JUST RIGHT" BOOK

Published in the U. S. A.

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IN APPRECIATION

To May G. Quigley
Who loves all children
I dedicate this book of Bible Stories
A. Gertrude Krottjer

FOREWORD



IN PREPARING this little book for the children, the author has hoped to contribute something, however small it may be, that will stimulate a deeper reverence for and stricter adherence to the significance of God's word. In these days when in some homes and schools, there has been so considerable a decrease in the use of the Bible as a medium to convey the moral truths to children's minds, there seems to be a need of awakening a fresh interest in these stories.

Paramount in the ways of teaching the truths and arousing interest in stories is to make the children love them. If they love them, they will read them again and ask and think about them. Unconsciously the lessons will be absorbed and fastened in their little minds to remain and grow there. In this book, therefore, an effort has been made to give these stories to the children in their own language and in a little more pleasing and applicable form than they have been generally rendered. In this rendition the text has been changed to modern reading methods, but truth has not been maimed.

The children should be taught to know God as the Creator, Divine Governor and Preserver of the Universe

FOREWORD—CONTINUED

and should, by absorbing and applying the moral examples in His word, learn better to govern themselves. How urgent then that children should early become familiar with the old, old stories that arm them for the future in this way!

No direct moralizing has been done, but rather an attempt made to select such stories whose moral lessons will leap forward without seeking. The characters are such as have always and will always live and they speak and are actuated through the influence of the same general emotions and principles by which man has been and is ever aroused. The reading of how others have surmounted obstacles and overcome difficulties has put courage into many a young heart and the unwavering stand taken by the old patriarchs in matters that challenged their ideas of what is right has taught innumerable youths to be true to their ideals. The stories of Christ's compassion and love toward all, even those who grieved and tortured him, makes the harboring of ill-will and bitterness appear plainly unworthy and ignoble.

Should then, this little book prove itself to have contributed something toward the advancement of upright living and aided even a few children to withstand evil in their own little communities, it will gloriously have accomplished its purpose.

A. Gertrude Krottjer





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God then decided that they must go.



The Forever Garden

THE very oldest and most beautiful of all the stories is the one of the Garden of Eden. It was there that all things began. Before that time the earth was dark as night and covered with black waters. There was no sunlight, no moonlight and no stars. Nothing could live on the earth as it was then and there was only the true God in His heaven.

It was God who sent the light and separated the earth from the water. He gathered the

waters into seas, rivers and lakes. He raised the hills and scooped out the valleys. Up in the sky He placed the sun and the moon and the stars. He made the huge whales and all the little fishes that swim in the waters. Into the woods He sent the lions and tigers and bears, and into the meadows the gentle horses and cows and sheep. Everything was beautiful! Up in the air the birds sang and in the flower beds the butterflies nibbled at the honey of the blooms. In the ponds the white swans floated and held their necks proudly as they gazed on their beautiful home.

The garden was perfect! Yet to God looking down from heaven, there seemed to be something missing. He thought that a human was needed to live and rule in that happy place.

And that very day God made Adam and set him as King in the garden. At first the man was very busy naming the animals and birds and flowers. He named the fruit trees as he ate from them and the streams and crystal

springs as he drank from them. The animals all lived friendly together and the whole garden was the home of a happy family.

But bye and bye, when everything had its name, and all things seemed complete, Adam had less and less to do and he sometimes grew very lonely. There were the animals and the birds, but Adam longed for a human companion. It would be so nice to have someone just like himself to share the lovely place.

He talked of this longing to God one day and when Adam was sound asleep that night, God sent Eve to the garden. The sun was already high in the heavens when Adam awoke to find her. How beautiful she was! Her long hair was like threads of gold and her eyes as blue as the sky on a bright summer day.

The two lived happily out in the garden and made friends with the animals. The birds perched on their masters' shoulders and even the shaggy yellow lions crouched beside Adam and Eve and licked their hands with their rough,

red tongues. Fear was not known. The animals had never heard of being harmed by people, and Adam and Eve never had the fear of being hurt by their four-footed friends.

Everyone in the beautiful garden looked on all things with kindness and never heard or said a cross or ugly word. Beauty and love filled every nook and corner of the garden and never since has anyone lived in such real joy.



The Fruit

HAD Adam and Eve been faithful to God's trust, all would have gone on in joy forever. No person would ever have been sad nor any child had cause to shed a single tear.

But a glossy looking serpent with evil words carried sin into the beautiful garden. From place to place he lazily moved about, looking for something that was wrong to happen. At last he thought of Eve. He wished that he could get her to eat of the fruit which God had

said she might not touch. God had done this to teach Eve to obey and the serpent thought it would be fun to see Eve disobey that law. At the fruit tree he spoke to Eve temptingly as she passed:

“Has God said that you must not eat of the fruit of this tree?” he asked.

Eve was surprised.

“Yes,” she said, “God said we may eat of the fruit of any tree except this one. If we eat of this tree we shall die for it is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

“That isn’t true,” the serpent mocked. “You will not die. This is the tree of wisdom. If you eat from it you will become wise—as wise as God.”

“Really?” Eve asked eagerly. “The tree of wisdom?”

She looked first at the tree, then at the serpent and back again, and ended by plucking the fruit.





Seeing this, the serpent turned and moved away.

“Think well before you eat,” he said with an evil laugh.

But Eve did not listen. She ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree and forgot all about what God had said. She thought only of being wise. She ran to give Adam some of the fruit to eat so that he too would become wise.

It was not until the violet twilight crept into the garden that Adam and Eve remembered that they had disobeyed God’s law. When God came down in the cool of the evening to walk with them, Eve felt a strangeness that she could not explain. She told Adam about it and they tried to hide from God and to fling away the fruit but it clung fast to their hands. For the first time fear stole upon them. Their free and happy feeling had passed away and they felt ashamed even before their four-footed friends. All their joy and peace had fled and their hearts

grew heavy and weary. They felt a great fear when they thought of what God might do now.

It was not strange that they felt this fear, for up in His heaven God was sad and grieved over what they had done. He still loved Adam and Eve but when He saw how they had allowed themselves to be tempted, He was sorry that they had not used His fair gifts as they should. God then decided that they must go their own way. They were no longer worthy of living in His beautiful garden, and He sent them out into the wide great world.

In the new world everything was different. The dewy blossoms drooped and the plants lost their leaves. No more live forever lovely flowers—only brambles that scratched. There would be only rough, rocky fields. There would be human toil, sickness and sorrow and at the end only death.

What a change from the lovely garden! But they had not obeyed God's law and their beautiful garden was closed against them.

Abel and Cain

OW very strange it must have been to be the only child on earth! Adam and Eve's little son Cain had not a single playmate and there was the whole outdoors to romp and play in alone.

But it was only for a little while for a baby brother Abel came to their home. As soon as Abel was old enough Cain played with him in the meadows under the clear blue sky and there they played the live-long day.

Bye and bye they grew up. Swift as arrows and as strong as the bears they grew, and their father and mother looked on them with great pride and joy. When the time came for each of them to learn the work of men, they planned great things for their boys. Cain learned to be a farmer. Adam taught him to plow, to sow the fields and reap the golden grain. Abel loved the gentle creatures and became a shepherd. While Cain watched the crops spring up from

the willing soil, Abel watched the little lambs nibbling at the tender blades of grass.

Along with their work the two young men were taught about God in his heavens. They were told of his goodness and taught to love Him. They were taught to offer presents to God and to do every little thing that might please Him.

One day as Abel went among his flocks, he saw a nice fat little lamb.

“That is the very best lamb I ever owned,” he said to Cain. “I am going to give it to God to show how much I love Him.

“Always talking of giving presents to God,” Cain said, “but come I will go with thee.”

Abel thought surely that Cain would bring of his very best fruits to offer to God, but Cain only took some old dry fruit because he wanted to keep the best for himself.

Together they piled the stones for the altar and gathered dry sticks for the fire. They placed their gifts on the altar and started a flame. This was the ancient way of sending gifts to

God. The people believed that the smoke as it curled and sped to the clouds would reach God and He would look down and see their presents.

Slowly the smoke from Abel's offering curled its way to heaven, but strangely, the smoke from Cain's offering would not rise. God above had seen Cain's little act of selfishness and would not take a gift given in that way.

Cain began to understand when the smoke would not rise and he began to grumble. Higher and straighter the smoke rose from Abel's lamb as it burned, but not the tiniest wreath came from Cain's fruit.

Filled with envy and spite, Cain grew more angry. He lost his reason and grasped Abel, throwing him on the ground. Shrill words came from his lips and he struck Abel a cruel blow. He leaped on him, and nearly mad with anger, cried:

"I will kill thee."

Poor Abel struggled to free himself, but again



Too late did Cain realize what he had done.

and again Cain struck him until at last the force of the blows crushed him.

Too late did Cain realize what he had done. He looked on all sides and around to see if anyone had seen his crime. He tried to flee but God stopped him and called sternly:

"Cain, Cain, the voice of Abel calls to me from the ground. What is wrong?"

"I do not know," Cain answered saucily, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

It was wrong for Cain to answer like that and God was angry. He sent His wrath down upon Cain. He bade the young man to leave home and wander forever. Never again could he stay and have a farm of his own for the briars and weeds would choke his crops. Far from home, father and mother, he must forever go on. Sun or rain, wind or calm, always he must go on. Through mud and brambles, through swamps, over brooks and miry ponds, forever.

Sorrow and grief come to them who will not obey and God wanted to teach Cain that.



“The Ark”

THE story of Noah who built the ark and of what happened to him is a very nice one.

Many years had passed since Cain's time. More and more people had come upon the earth and the world had become wicked and fallen low. Soon it became so bad that God wished

He had never made it. He had made so many plans to make His people happy if only they would not disobey His laws, but it seemed in vain. Always they grew more wicked. There seemed nothing left to do but destroy them and start a whole new world.

Among all those people there was just one good man. That was Noah. He lived with his wife and three sons. They were always cheery and pleasant and their hearts were kind and pure. Many times Noah had asked the wicked people to cease their foolish ways, but they only laughed at him. God saw this and He loved Noah for his good deeds, so that when the time came to destroy the world, God wanted to save this good man and his family.

“With a great flood I shall wash the earth clean,” God said. “Only you and your family shall be saved.”

And then Noah was told to build a great huge ship. Into this the family was to go. They were to take with them two of every kind



of living animals. Not only the tame animals, such as the horses and cows and sheep, but also the wild ones, such as the lions and the great elephants. There was to be room for hay and grain, for food and for all things that would be needed for many weeks.

As soon as they could, Noah and his sons went to work. They sawed logs and planks and cut poles to make the ship. As they worked the wicked people crowded around and laughed. They said Noah was foolish to think God would send a flood to destroy all the people.

Well pleased with the ark when it was finished, Noah went to collect the animals. In came the



And bunnies came hurrying.

bears, the lions, the zebras and the giraffes. All the beasts came marching in, two by two. Even the little birds and bunnies came hurrying, all eager to be saved. They seemed to know that a storm was coming to drown all upon the earth.

The people laughed more and heaped scorn upon Noah because as yet there had been no sign that anything would happen. They said that even if it did rain, not enough could ever fall to cover the highest mountain and drown all the people.

Without waiting for anything else, Noah put the animals into their places and then locked the great door of the ark. In only a few moments God did as He had said.

Pitter, patter came the rain. The wind began to roar and the rain beat against the ark. Faster and faster it fell in torrents until soon the rivers overflowed and the waters rose rapidly, sweeping away houses and all things. Together the family watched the dark clouds pour down their floods and they thanked God for their safety. The ark seemed to be floating on a large ocean—nowhere could land be seen.

For forty days it rained and rained and then—just as it had started, the wind came and blew the waters away. The ark floated for days and days as the water went down but at last it settled on a mountain top and it looked like a little island in a deep sea.

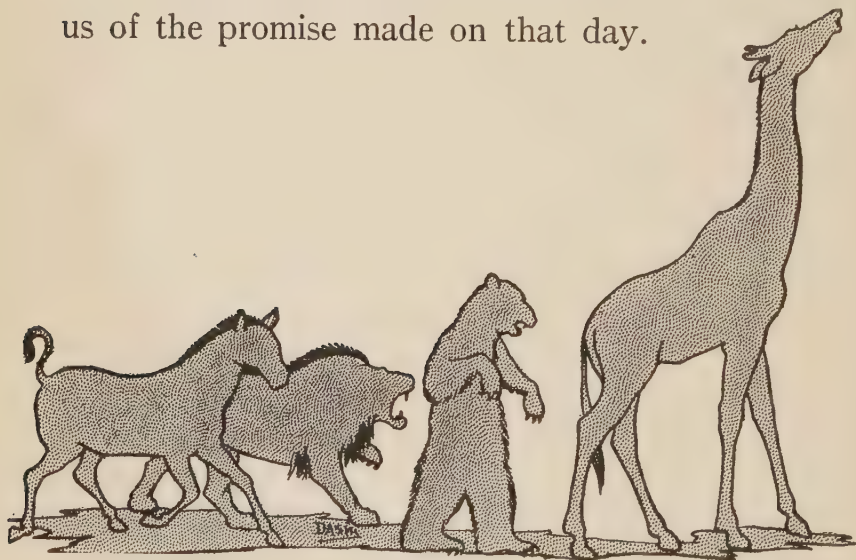
Down and down the water kept going until soon they could see the new green slopes of the mountains. Again the forests and pastures came into sight and the whole earth was new and fresh. All wickedness had been washed away.

How wonderful it seemed to them to be on dry land again. The animals and birds scattered

to the fields and woods, but Noah stopped right there and knelt to give thanks to God.

As he knelt there a wonderful bow of beautiful colors appeared in the sky. There were blues and greens and pinks and lavenders and every color there is. And a gentle voice began to speak, telling Noah that the bow was the sign of a solemn promise for all time that God would never again destroy the earth by a flood.

So even now when dark clouds frighten us and we tremble for fear that another flood may come, God always sends the rainbow to remind us of the promise made on that day.





He had many servants.

Abraham

ABRAMHAM was a very rich man. The wealth of a man in those days was in his flocks and herds and Abraham had hundreds and thousands of cows and sheep and goats. His pastures stretched far beyond the reach of his eyes. He owned many packs of camels and swift desert horses too. He had many servants and his farm looked like a little village of tents, there were so many of them.

Although Abraham ruled wisely and well and every day became richer, he was quite unhappy.

It was because there was no son to bear his name and no heir to his many goods and lands. As he watched the cows in the meadows, the valleys thick with corn, waving in the wind, the trees heavy with rosy apples, the vineyard with royal purple grapes, he longed and longed for a son to help him share these riches. He felt that a baby son would be worth more than all the riches that he could pile between sea and sky.

Day by day the longing grew and each night he prayed to God to fulfill his wish. The dear God looked down in love on His servant and because he had always been a good man, God promised that in the future a little boy would come. He also promised that the boy would be the father of a great nation. And that was not all. He promised that from that family the greatest man of the world would come. The savior! The Christ who would give His life that the world might be saved from death!

This made Abraham very very happy. He waited patiently and went on doing good deeds.

One of his good deeds was to adopt a little orphan boy named Lot.

The little lad grew up with Abraham and his wife Sarah, who was a dark-eyed princess, and they were very good to him.

Abraham grew older and older and although a son had not yet come, he believed in the promises. He trusted God to send the little son and every morning when the sunbeams came smiling through the door of his tent, they would find Abraham in silent prayer for the son and heir that he was to be blessed with.



Isaac

 SAAC means "The Smiling One." Abraham named his baby son that because he was so bright and sunny and smiled more than he cried. As the child grew, the old father thought his son the strongest and most beautiful lad in the country and the neighbors looked on with envy at the child's handsome face and princely coats. His eyes were coal black and sparkling and he was always brave and joyous.

Almost any evening one could see Isaac and his father before the door of their tent, telling each other of what had passed in the day. From the old father's lips came only words of love for his boy and his thoughts were always held in dreams of Isaac's bright future. He no longer cared to make riches for himself. All he cared about was to make his little son happy and great.

The lad loved his father very dearly too. And this was the only reward Abraham sought. At a tender word or caress the old man's face would

light up like the sun and soon he learned that love, and not wealth, is the sweetest thing on earth.

And in this way the golden days of Isaac's childhood passed by. The fond father taught Isaac all about God and His love and how to worship. Often they would go off to the hills together, there to build an altar and make offerings. Isaac learned easily and it gave his father great joy.

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It seemed as if Abraham was almost too happy. God, looking down into the old man's heart, thought so, and saw that Abraham was making almost an idol of the boy. God wanted to test Abraham's love to see if Isaac had any of God's place in his father's heart.

In the twilight then that evening God's voice called to Abraham:

"Take now thy son whom thou lovest," God said, "and go into the land of Moriah. There build an altar and offer thy son to Me."

It was a bitter test. Abraham now saw what he had done and saw that his pleasant dreams of Isaac were over. Death was now waiting. Never before had he even thought that Isaac might be taken away from him. Yet his love for God was not shaken. He still believed God's way to be the best.

In the morning, just as they so often did, Abraham and Isaac went up into the mountain to build an altar. Isaac carried the dry sticks and took with him his bow and arrow for he was skilled as an archer. Happily he darted along. His faith in his old father was as secure as in his childhood. Old Abraham's heart was sad and breaking, but he tried to be cheerful so Isaac would not notice that.

At midday they reached the mountain and climbed up over the steep rocky sides. Some times Isaac had to crawl instead of walk but his eyes sparkled with pleasure and the hills heard the echo of his merry laughter.

When they came to the chosen spot, Isaac



Isaac carried the dry sticks.

busied himself bringing the stones and piling up the dry sticks, neatly and carefully. But suddenly it came to his mind that something had been forgotten.

"Father," he called, "where is the lamb for the offering?"

Abraham's face grew pale, but he answered calmly:

"God will provide."

Poor Isaac did not understand but he was certain that his father must know what he was about. Never once had his faith in his father had time to grow dim.

Every moment things seemed to grow more strange. Abraham took cords and bound Isaac's hand and feet! Now he bound the body and laid him on the altar! Isaac's heart beat faster. Still he could not understand, but even now his faith in his father did not fail. His own dear old father would not harm him, he knew.

Hardly had Isaac time to think any more when Abraham did a surprising thing. He

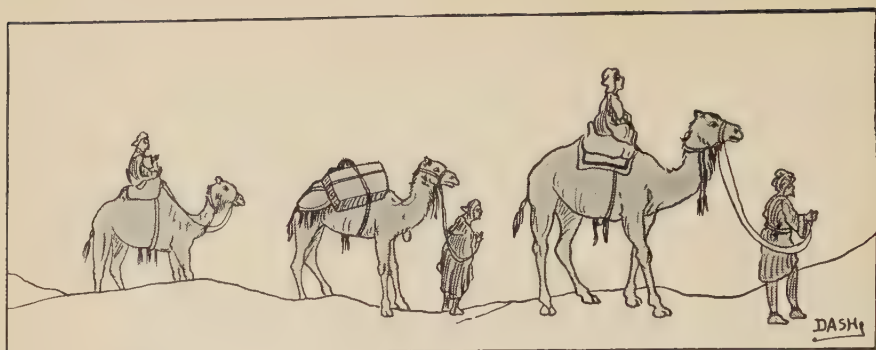


And stopped before the altar.

started the fire and now—Isaac's heart stood still. Tears streamed down the old father's cheeks but he could not fail in his duty to God. He lifted the axe and was about to strike when—noise and rustling in the bushes behind stopped him. A fat little ram darted out and stopped before the altar. At the same moment, that very second, a soft voice came to soothe God's faithful sons and said:

“Lay not thine hand upon the lad, for now I know that thou lovest God seeing thou has not withheld thine only son from Me.”

Isaac understood now and he loved his father more for his strong faith in the true God.



They travelled for many days.

Rebekkah



BRAHAM sat before the door of his tent pondering over Isaac. Twenty years had passed and the boy was now grown to be a brave and wise man. He was tall and strong and his father had trained him well in all that becomes a good son. His skill and courage had made him a leader among the people, but old Abraham felt that Isaac would be happier if he had a wife.

There were many beautiful maidens in the village but they worshipped idols and Abraham wished his son to marry a girl who believed in the true God. Across the desert with God's chosen people lived some of Abraham's cousins

and old friends. Abraham thought there surely would be a maiden fair enough there for Isaac.

Isaac was quite pleased with his father's idea. He wanted to go over the very next day but Abraham thought it would be better to send a servant. It was a long, long tiresome journey and in those days the people sent their faithful servants on such errands.

Eliezer, who had charge of all the important family affairs, was chosen. With ten of the best camels, packed with beautiful presents, and other servants to help, he started out. They traveled for many days, and all the way Eliezer cast about in his mind for some way to choose the maiden. He must be certain to bring home only the best maiden and she must prove herself before he would ask her to return with him to be his master's bride.

Just at twilight, after a very hot day, they came to the gates of the city and there they stopped to rest.

In that little city the people lived very simply. The greatest people built their own houses, fed and cared for their own horses and camels and thought it no shame. The ladies tended to the houses, milked the cows and made the cheese into butter. They wove the wool into clothes, and the maidens carried the water from the well, just outside the city gate.

As it was the custom just at twilight, the maidens were busy carrying water from the well. Only a few had passed when Eliezer saw walking toward him with a light graceful step a very beautiful young girl with a water pitcher placed on her shoulder. She was fair enough at least, Eliezer thought. She was tall and slender with long black hair reaching far below her knees. Her eyes were big and black as midnight. She wore robes of gay colored silk that clung softly. As Eliezer watched, the maiden drew close to the well and lowered her pitcher from her shoulder, and the old servant thought he had never seen one half so lovely.



He said he had no pitcher.

Eliezer bowed low before the maiden and told how he had come from afar. He said he had no pitcher with which to draw water and asked if he might drink from hers.

“Oh, yes, gladly,” she said kindly, and gave him the pitcher.

Her voice was as lovely as her pretty face.

When Eliezer had drunk, she said sweetly:

“I will give your camels to drink also.”

Now this was not an easy task. There were many camels and camels drink wells of water! It seemed to Eliezer that a maiden with thoughts so kind would make a good wife for his master. For her kindness he gave her of the perfume and lovely gifts. There were silk and linen robes, furs and sandals, bracelets and necklaces, all rich and beautiful things which they wore in those days.

Then Eliezer told why he had been sent by Abraham and how he believed that this maiden had proven herself worthy of his young master. He asked her to return with him and they went

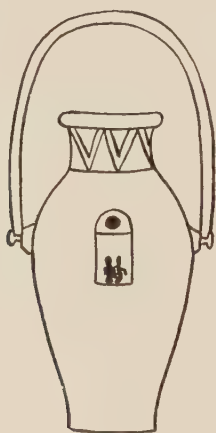


A messenger had gone on ahead.

home to tell the story to the maiden's father and mother. Since they all agreed, Rebekkah, for that was her name, returned with the old servant.

It seemed there was no man ever so proud as Eliezer when he returned to his master with the beautiful Rebekkah, dressed in her new robes and shawls and jewels.

A messenger had gone ahead to tell Isaac and the happy groom came to meet them. When he saw Rebekkah he would be not content until he had made her his happy little wife.



Esau and Jacob

SAU and Jacob were two princes who were twins. Esau was really about a half hour older than Jacob but people called them twins just the same. They lived over the hills and far away in the land of Canaan and though they had all that boys need to make them happy, they were quite wretched. It was because they were jealous of each other. From the time they were born, they quarrelled and when they grew up Jacob took away Esau's share of his father's riches. It happened in this way.

In the olden days when the fathers died the eldest son was given the largest and best part of the fortune. Because Esau was the elder in that family, he expected to receive the greatest share when his father Isaac grew old and feeble.

Yet it so happened that Esau cared very little for riches. He loved the woods and knew every little rustle in the grass and even the hoots of the owl. He loved to hear the splash of the fish

in the little brook and was known all over the country as a famous archer. Day after day he would roam the woods and plains and send his arrows whizzing. He caught bears, wolves and wild goats, but most of all he liked to shoot the deer. When he came home at night with a deer flung across his shoulders, the whole family were happy because it meant a delicious venison dinner. From early childhood Esau had cooked the venison himself and none could cook so well as he. The smell of good wholesome food could turn Esau from any task or pleasure and when he wanted very much to please his dear old father, it would always be with a dish of savory venison.

Jacob's habits were of a very different kind. He loved to stay at home with his mother, Rebekkah. He loved his mother most and perhaps Rebekkah loved Jacob the most too. At least she proved it one day when her old husband was failing fast and it was plain he could not live much longer.



Jacob kneeled nervously.

The old father was lying on his bed resting. He knew that soon he would go to the Kingdom above. His thoughts wandered back to the happy days. How he longed to live them over again! He remembered the good things Esau used to cook for him. If he could have just once more a dish of delicious venison! Esau would cook some for him, he was certain, and he called Esau to ask. Esau was just too happy to please his old father so he made haste to the great forest to find a young deer.

In the meantime Rebekkah and Jacob were planning a shameful deed. They had overheard Isaac's wish and they knew that Esau would that day get his best share of the fortune as a reward. All her life Rebekkah had wanted Jacob to have the best share and she had planned and schemed ways in which to get it for him. Today her chance had come. The aged father was nearly blind and he would not be able to tell them apart, except for just one thing. Esau's body was rough and hairy, while

Jacob's was fine and smooth. Rebekkah was afraid that old Isaac might stroke and caress the boy as he blessed him and gave him the fortune and then he would learn the deceit. She wished that she knew of some way to make Jacob's body feel as Esau's. She thought and thought of first one thing and then another and then finally she thought that perhaps the skin of a young goat would be the means. Together Jacob and his mother killed a little goat and took off the skin. They wound it carefully around Jacob and were almost certain that the old blind father would never know that it wasn't Esau himself.

Now for the venison. Rebekkah had learned from Esau just how to cook it and that was an easy matter. So when all was done, Jacob dressed as Esau usually did and went boldly to his father.

Isaac was too feeble to rise up in his bed.

"Is it you, Esau"? he asked.

"Yes father," Jacob answered. He talked in a hoarse voice like Esau. He moved about and

acted that way too. While the old man ate of the venison a sly smile played about Jacob's lips. He knew his old father thought him to be Esau.

After the old man had eaten, the time came for the blessing and the fortune. For this Jacob and his mother had waited long. They trembled as they thought of what would happen if their plan would fail but it was now too late to change.

"Come here my son," the father said. "Kneel before me that I may give thanks and the blessing to you."

Jacob kneeled nervously. He was still a little afraid that this time the father might not be fooled. Just as they had expected the old man caressed him and talked long with Jacob. But even then Jacob was not sorry. He deceived his father and the old man never knew until too late. Jacob received the blessing and the fortune and then left the tent.

Great was Esau's anger when he came home soon after Jacob had gone and was told of the

wicked deed. He looked about for Jacob and wished to kill him. But Jacob had fled to a far country called Haran.

For many years Jacob lived in that far country in the house of Laban but he grew homesick and wished many times to return to his own people. He had asked God earnestly to forgive the mean wrong he had done his brother and God saw that Jacob was truly sorry.

One day, taking his sheep and his cows, and all his goods, Jacob started back on the long journey to his old home, but as he neared his brother Esau's house he began to fear. He was afraid that Esau would run out and kill him, so he sent some of his servants ahead with his flock that he had divided as a present for Esau.

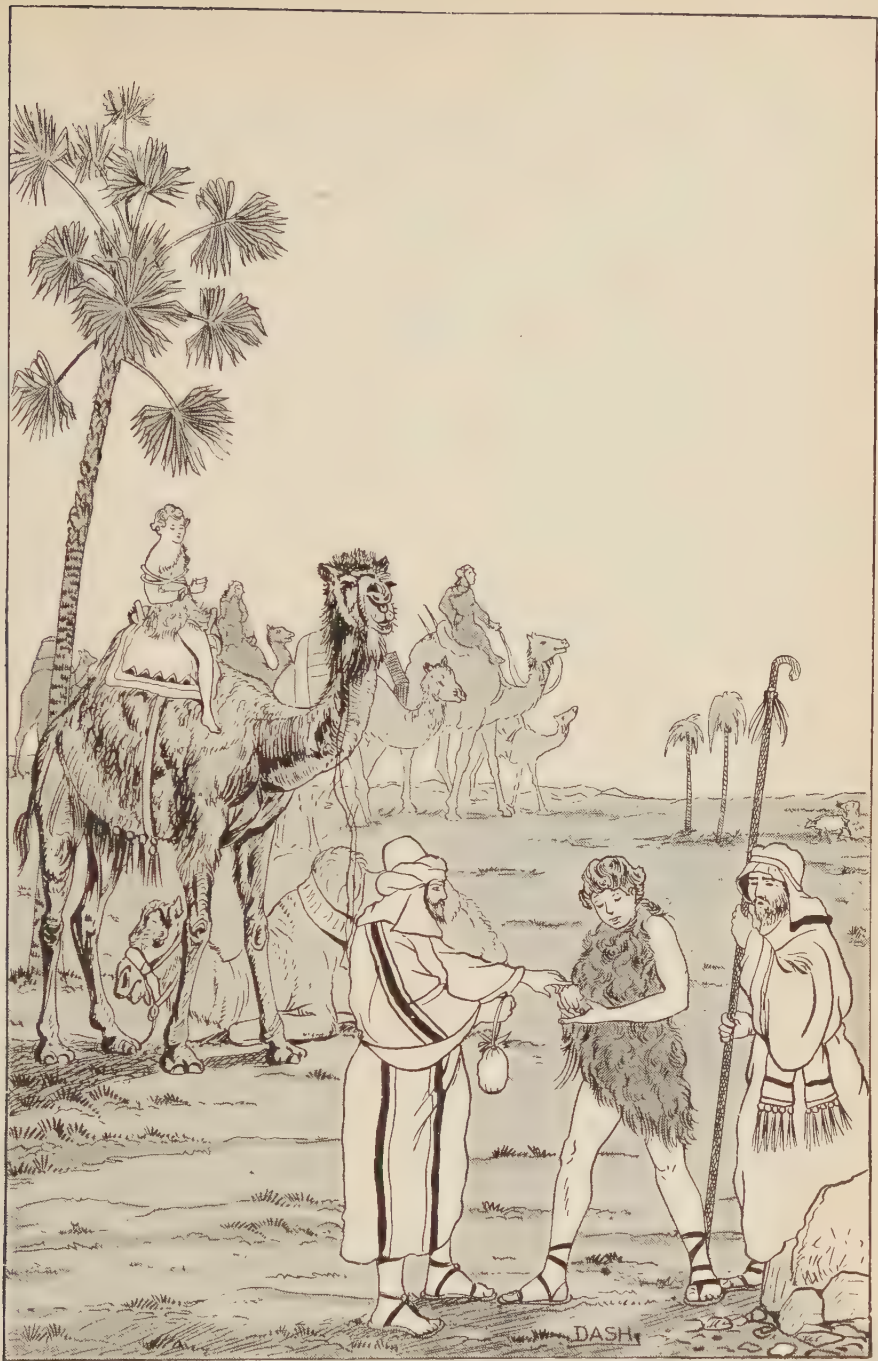
When Esau saw how truly sorry his brother was, he forgot all his old anger and came out to meet him and to tell him that all had been forgiven.

Joseph the Dreamer

ITTLE curly haired Joseph and his baby brother Benjamin were very sad. Their dear mother Rachel had just been taken away by the Angel of Death and though they loved their father and ten older brothers, none could take the place of their mother.

Jacob, the father, made Joseph promise to take very good care of Benjamin and Joseph did. He taught his little brother to shoot with the bow and arrow and many other things. The father took great pride in his faithful sons but Joseph was the favorite. Perhaps it was because he was such a bright smiling little lad.

On Joseph's twelfth birthday his father gave him a beautiful coat. It was woven of crimson silk and linen thread and dyed in rainbow colors. The boy was very proud of the coat because it was one such as only little princes wore. This nice gift made Joseph's older brothers a little



Put the poor lad on a tall camel.

cross. They thought it showed that Jacob loved Joseph more than the other sons.

The older brothers were all shepherds and watched their father's goats and sheep. Joseph helped some, but he was still quite young and could not work very hard. He liked to gather olives and nice fat figs. Sometimes he would run out in the meadows and look for wildflowers and honey. Then too, he would sit in the shade of the palm trees and have strange dreams. So often did he do that that his brothers began to call him "Joseph the dreamer." God in His own way had given Joseph the power to tell the meanings of these dreams and they always turned out as Joseph foretold. The brothers realized this power in Joseph and it filled them with more envy, for being able to tell the meanings of dreams at that time was very important. All dreams were messages from God in those days.

Joseph Sold

DAYS, weeks and months passed and Joseph still played and dreamed in the groves while his brothers watched the flocks. That summer the hills were brown and bare and the shepherds had to go to the river valley in the North to find green grass for the sheep. Joseph stayed with Jacob, his father, and little brother because they were so lonely.

One bright morning as Jacob was sitting in the door of his tent he called to Joseph, saying:

“I want you to go to your brothers in the valley. They have been gone a long, long time. I want to be sure that it is well with them.”

So Joseph went. He wore his lovely coat and a pair of sandals for walking over the rough stony places and he carried a bag with food and water. At midday the tinkle of bells and the bleating sheep told him that his brothers were near. He saw them then, resting under a tree, eating bread and figs for lunch.

When they saw Joseph afar off, they said:

“Here comes Joseph the dreamer. We do not like him and wish he were not our brother any more. Let us throw him into the deep old well. There he will die and none will know what we have done.”

Poor Joseph! There was no reason for this deed for he had never done his brothers the slightest harm. Down into the damp dark well they thrust him. He cried and called to his brothers, but in vain, his cries were not answered. There he lay down to die with no hope of rescue.

But the great and high God did not forget him.

Looking all about to see if anyone had seen their deed, the brothers spied something in the distance. Slowly it came over the hills and turned out to be a train of richly laden camels. When it came near the brothers saw that the men were traders. On the backs of the camels were packed sacks of spices and other things.

“Oh, let us sell Joseph as a slave to these traders,” the brothers cried. “We could get



"See, this is Joseph's coat."

money for him. We will never see him again and it would be better than leaving him in the well."

They ran to the well to take Joseph. He was pale and cold but they did not care. The selfish brothers sold him for twenty pieces of silver.

The traders put the poor lad on the back of a tall camel and rode lazily away. His beautiful world had changed and now he was a slave.

Taking the beautiful coat the brothers dipped it in the blood of a little lamb which they killed. When they reached home at dark they said to their father:

"See, this is Joseph's coat. He must be dead for the coat is all stained with blood. The wild beasts must have killed him."

The old father wept many tears when he heard the ill news. He was heart-broken. For a long time Jacob grieved for his son and no one could cheer him. The brothers were ashamed and sorry and wished they had never done that wicked thing but it was too late to be sorry.

The Strange Dream

HE king was in a very ill humor. All the wise men of the land had been called to tell the meaning of his dream but none had been able to do so.

“I must know,” the king cried, “I cannot rest until I understand.”

The king’s servants thought and thought and at last the chief officer said:

“Among our slaves is a young man. This lad seems to be able to tell the meanings of strange dreams. We can at least try him.”

Well pleased with this new idea, the king ordered Joseph brought before him at once.

Joseph was a little timid for he had never been in the king’s palace before, but when the king spoke, Joseph felt brave again.

“Is it true?” the king asked, “that you can tell me the meaning of my dream?”

"Oh, no," Joseph replied. "Not I alone, only with the help of God."

"Worthy young man," the king went on. "If you can do as I ask, you shall have a great reward. You shall be made the chief ruler for none in the kingdom will be as wise as you."

The dream was told and Joseph listened carefully. When all had been said, he began:

"The dream is a message from God. It means that for seven years there will be so much food that the people will have enough to spare. There will be too much corn and wheat and grapes. There will be too many almonds and too much milk and honey. After that will come seven years when there will be not half enough food. The corn will stop growing and the wheat fields and vineyards will die."

Joseph stopped here a minute to think.

"The message," he went on, "is from God to tell you not to waste food. During the next seven years you must save every little bit that you do not use. If you do this, there will be



The people will then have plenty.

enough to feed the people during the seven years when no food grows. The people then will have plenty and will not starve."

Something seemed to tell the king that this was exactly right. He believed every word Joseph had said and immediately sent orders to all the corners of the kingdom telling the people to save as much food as they could. They built large barns to store it in. The king was so thankful to Joseph, he gave him honors and gifts and made him chief ruler as he had promised.

Joseph was very happy now. He wore beautiful robes like the king and lived in a fine palace. He learned to talk Egyptian like the new people and soon he began to look like one. He was very good to his people and they learned to love him.

The seven years passed by and the dream came true. The corn and the wheat and the grapes stopped growing just as God had told Joseph it would. But the people were ready. They had saved enough to take care of them-

selves, until the famine would be over. There was even enough to sell to people from other lands.

One Spring day as Joseph was sitting in his palace selling corn, ten shepherds from a foreign land came to buy food. Although it had been years since Joseph had seen them, he knew the shepherds at once and said to himself:

“Oh, they are my brothers who sold me to the traders!”

The brothers did not know Joseph. They thought he was still a slave and never dreamed that he might be a chief ruler. He had changed very much and he made believe that he did not know them.

“Who are you and where do you come from?” he asked.

“We are the sons of Jacob of Canaan and we have come to buy food,” they answered.

“No, you are spies,” Joseph said. “I do not believe you.”

Then Joseph asked them all about their family

and he learned that his father and little brother still lived. How he wished that he could see them again! Then all at once he thought of a way and he wrinkled up his face and said in a cross voice:

"I still believe you are spies. If you are not, I will give you a way to prove it. Go home and bring to me the youngest brothers. If you do this I will know that you have told the truth and are honest men. But unless you do as I ask, you shall be put in prison. And one of you must act as my servant here until the others come back."

"Oh, please do not ask for little Benjamin!" they cried. "You may have one or even more of us, but our father cannot part with the boy. He loves him so dearly he will surely die if Benjamin is taken from him."

But Joseph said sternly:

"No, I must have your youngest brother. You must do as I ask to prove to me that you are not spies."

So Joseph kept one brother as a prisoner and the others went home. When they told their father the bad news he felt very very sad.

“I cannot let Benjamin go,” he cried. “Joseph is dead. Now must I lose Benjamin too? I shall not let him have Benjamin. I could not bear it.”

But he had to change his mind. Soon the time came when the food was all gone and the brothers had to go to their father and say:

“Father, we must have more food. Our wives and babies will die unless we get more. You must let Benjamin go. Only he can save us.”

The old father then called Benjamin to him and told him what must be done. Benjamin was not afraid. He was very brave and in the morning he went away with his brothers. They traveled fast over the hot sand and soon came to Joseph’s palace. He was standing outside where he greeted them kindly. When he saw Benjamin he was very happy. He put his arm

around the boy and with tears in his eyes said:

“God bless you, my boy.”

Joseph did not want his brothers to see that he was sad and weeping and had to leave the room. When he came back his heart was filled with pity for his brothers and he could keep the secret no longer.

“I am Joseph your Brother,” he told them. “The boy whom you sold to the traders fifteen years ago.”

This frightened the brothers. They were afraid he would punish them for that cruel sin, but Joseph smiled at them and said:

“Do not be afraid. I will forgive you. I want you all to be happy. Now go to my father and tell him that I live and am well. Then hurry and bring him to me.”

When Joseph saw his dear old father he was so happy he never wanted to be away from him again. The old man clung to him like a child and cried and would not let him go.

“Promise me never to leave me till I die,” he cried.

So Joseph gave them all pieces of land in Goshen and there they lived happily all the rest of their lives.



The Baby in the Basket



ALL over Goshen the little mothers wept and mourned for their boy babies. It was because a new cruel king, had sent out a wicked order that the poor little wee things were to be put to death as soon as they opened their little eyes. The king had made the order so as to keep the babies from growing up and becoming soldiers. He feared that some day the Hebrew people would rise up against him and take away his throne. He had been cruel and ruled them with many slave like duties.

The heartbroken mothers begged to keep their babies but the king would not take away the order. He even sent his guards out through the kingdom to see if any mother might have hid her baby.

When little Miriam (the baby's sister) saw the guards she ran home as fast as she could to tell her mother. She was afraid it might go hard with them if the guards found the little

baby brother they had hidden. He was such a dear little thing they could not bear to think of sending him away.

At the news of the guards coming a great rush of fear swept over the mother. The little boy was now three months old and every day he had become dearer. She could not possibly end this dear little boy's life. Yet she knew that if the guards found him, they would do it.

Amid those sad thoughts an idea came to her mind. If she carried it out there would at least be one small chance that someone would find the baby and keep him. If her deed were found out by the king, she herself would be put to death, but it seemed to be worth it all for the baby.

Then Miriam and her mother made a little wicker basket, just large enough for the baby. All over the outside it was covered with thick black paint to keep out the water and soon it was ready. The little boy was placed inside on a downy pink pillow and Miriam and her mother

carried him down to the river. There they left the baby among the ferns and bushes in the marshes and Miriam stayed to watch after the mother went home.

Along the banks of the river the reeds grew thick and here Miriam hid so she could watch the baby.

It seemed she had only been there a moment when she heard footsteps. They were soft footsteps, as if made with velvet shoes. Peeping through the reeds, she saw the king's daughter with her maids coming down the path to bathe. She knew they would surely see the baby and hear his little cries.

The little sister watched eagerly. Her heart beat faster and faster as she watched them go straight to where the baby lay, and then suddenly there was much noise and loud talking for they had found him.

There he lay on his soft pillow, all pink and white after his nap, his yellow hair curling about the dimpled face and one thumb in his round red



Of course the princess wanted to keep the lovely baby.

mouth. The little one blinked his eyes and looked all around and all at once spied the princess' necklace as she bent over him. Quickly he put out his tiny hands and began to play.

Of course the princess wanted to keep the lovely baby. She loved him from the very first. Miriam, from her hiding place saw it all and a clever thought darted through her mind. Jumping up she ran to the princess and said:

"Would you like a nurse for the baby? I know a lady who just loves babies and she'd make the best nurse in the world."

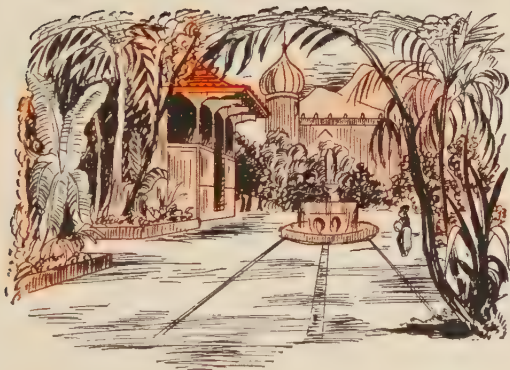
The best was none too good for the princess' new baby so Miriam sped home to get the nurse. Over the hill, up the lane, straight to her mother she ran till she was quite out of breath. Think how happy they must have been! It was just like having the baby back again.

All day the mother played with him and at slumber time she sang hush-a-bye-lo.

The little boy was brought up to be a prince but when he was old enough to understand, his

mother told him the secret. And from then on he loved the old nurse even more than his princess mother.

There is a story about how, when the boy was grown up, he led his people out of the land of the cruel king, into the land of milk and honey and became a leader over them.



Moses and the Wicked King

 OSES was now grown up but he never forgot that he was of the Children of Israel and it hurt him to see his people so brutally treated. They worked hard and long but the king was never pleased. Every day the work became harder until it seemed they could bear it no longer. At evening they were so tired, some would fall on the path toward home. When Moses tried to help them the king sought his life so he fled to another land. His people then lived only for the promise of God to send them a leader to escape to another land.

God had chosen Moses to be this leader and one day He said to him:

“I have seen the suffering of the Children of Israel and have heard their prayers and know their sorrow. The day has come to take them out of the land of the wicked king and bring them into a land of milk and honey, and you, Moses, are to lead them.”

Now Moses loved his people so much that he wanted to begin work at once and hurried back to tell them. They all wondered just how they could escape but they trusted Moses and did just as he said. They knew God was leading Moses just as Moses was leading them.

In the morning Moses went to the king to ask for the freedom of the people, but, of course, the king would not give them up.

“Who is thy God that I should obey Him and let the people go?” the king said.

“Our God is the God of wonders,” Moses answered.

“Show me then a wonder,” the king sneered, “so that I may believe.”

Upon this God in Heaven told Moses what to do.

To the great surprise of the king, Moses took a rod which he carried and throwing it on the ground, it became a serpent.

Moses thought surely the king would see the

greatness of God when he saw this, but instead the king said scornfully:

“I cannot let the people go for a God like that. I have magicians who can do even better than that.”

Moses was not ready to give up just yet. He had been told what to do next and he followed the king to the river. Hardly had the king dipped into the river to bathe when Moses, standing on the bank, struck the water with the rod and immediately the stream was turned to hot blood. Not only that, but all the lakes and ponds around were also filled with blood.

“Doest thou believe me now?” Moses asked.

The king was afraid but even now he would not yield.

Now Moses went into the fields and pasture and waved his rod. The dismal croaking of frogs was at once heard everywhere. They crossed the roads, crawled into the streets and lanes, hopping and skipping. Into the yards they crept into the houses. On the tables, in the beds, everywhere the frogs hopped.



If only the frogs were taken away.

The king was angry. The touch of the cold wet frogs made his skin creep. Now it was his turn to ask a favor. He called to Moses and promised to set the people free if only the frogs would be taken away.

Good Moses was only too glad and took away all the frogs. Scarcely had they all gone when the king changed his mind. He thought he had been too easily frightened.

"I did not mean what I said," he told Moses. "Foolish, to think I would let the people go."

With sad thoughts Moses left the palace, but God again came to his aid.

"Strike the dust with the rod," God said, "and cover the land with lice, ugly swarms of them."

Immediately came thousands of busy little lice, crawling forwards and backwards, into and upon everything, until the people cried aloud in their misery.

Again the king called Moses.

"Take away the lice and I will grant your wish," he promised.

"But I cannot trust your word," Moses said.

"Oh, do not be so cruel," the king begged. "Do not do evil for evil."

Thinking of his people, Moses at once destroyed the horrid lice, but just as before, the king changed his mind.

"It will be more harm for your highness this time," Moses said, "for my God will only send a worse plague."

The king only laughed, but the worse plague came. Swarms upon swarms of big buzzing flies filled the air. Over the king, his servants and his people, the huge green dragon-flies crept, stinging and biting.



DASH

Again the king called Moses.

When the king saw this, he thought he would do most anything if only the flies would go. Once more he called to Moses.

"I promise upon my word of honor," he said this time. "Take away the plague and I will satisfy your wish."

Again the plague was taken away by Moses. The wicked king! As soon as the flies left, he only laughed again.

"You cannot frighten me," he mocked.

It was now time to strike the wicked king harder. On that day all the cattle in the land died. The cows, the sheep, the oxen, all the animals. Their moans were heard for miles outside the city and the riches of thousands were lost.

Again the king gave his word but did not keep it. Each time he grew more stubborn.

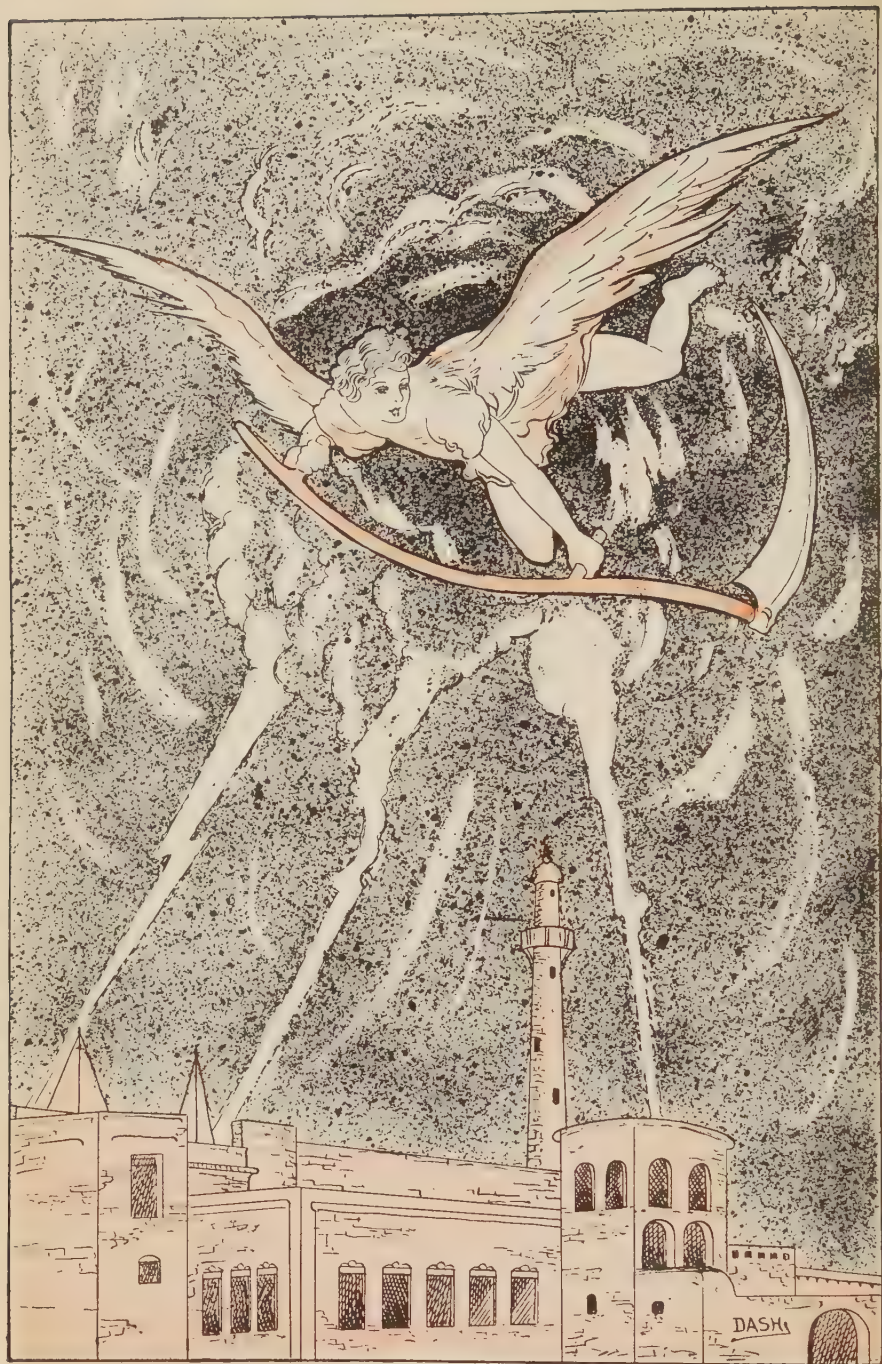
Next God sent sickness. Great painful boils came upon the king and his people. Everywhere was pain and illness and the people thought they could stand it no longer. Hoping each time to

free his people, Moses would take away the grief, only to find that the king would not yield.

Two more plagues came upon them. A storm of hail by which the fields of grain were destroyed. And another of countless beetles, eating and gnawing. So thick were the beetles that even the trees and houses were sometimes hidden. Yet the king, growing more stubborn, would not give in.

Now God would no longer coax. He had to force the king to listen to the worthy Moses. That night God sent the Angel of Death to the homes of the Egyptians. In every home the eldest child was called by death. The nobles and chiefs lost their sons and even the king's son died that night. On and on the angel went.

That was too much for Pharaoh. He arose from his bed when he heard the terrible news, and in hope of bringing back his son, rushed to Moses. Everywhere was weeping and mourning and the king wished he had done better with Moses. But it was too late. He saw that



On and on the Angel went.

unless he gave the Children of Israel their freedom at once, something even worse might happen. Not waiting for another word from Moses he set the people free and Moses led them towards the land of milk and honey.





He showed marks of great strength.

The Strongest Boy

THE strongest boy in all the land was Samson. Ever since he was a small lad he showed marks of great strength. He could run as if he had wings under his feet and he could jump higher than anyone. When he grew up he was known all over the land as the most gallant and brave. On the whole he was kind, good and noble but there was a good deal of fierceness in him. His deeds were far beyond the might of other men and all feared his anger.

It is told that the secret of his strength lay in his never touching wine or grapes and never cutting his hair, and that God had told his father and mother to bring him up that way. But it is about his way of killing the lion that we can see how really strong and brave he was.

The land in which Samson lived was warm. There were sandy deserts and jungles where the wild beast roamed. Samson never feared these. In his travels he often went by the snares of wolves and the haunts of tigers.

One day he heard just behind him a great monster's panting breath. Turning around, he saw a tawny lion watching him. Any other man would have run for his life, but Samson did not run or even scream. Neither was he filled with fear. As the lion pushed his head out of the clump of bushes and glared at Samson with great yellow eyes, Samson stopped. His heart grew great within him. Though the lion whelped and roared and with glaring eyes made ready to leap at him, Samson still did not fear. Instead,

as the lion bounded out, Samson rushed forward and in a few moments the shaggy maned lion lay dead at his feet. He had crushed him with the force of his wonderful strength.

* * *

Samson and the Phillistines

HE soldiers of the Phillistine Army were all eager to capture Samson so as to have him as their leader. He was known as the strongest man in the land and the battles were always lost because Samson was on the enemy's side. But try as they might, Samson could not be captured.

There was only one more thing to do. It was to have Delilah, the woman whom Samson loved, to learn for them the secret of the great man's strength.

Straight to Delilah the soldiers went and promised her eleven hundred pieces of silver if she would give them the secret. Delilah was dainty and fair and pretended to love Samson. He told her many things, but in vain did she ask



Samson rushed forward.

him the secret of his strength, for he would not tell her. God had forbidden Samson to tell the secret and Samson feared that if he told even Delilah she might tell another person. Of course this was just what Delilah wanted to do.

Night after night when Samson went to Delilah's home, she asked him for the secret, but he would not tell.

"Tell me how to bind you so that you cannot get loose," she said, again one night.

"If I were bound with seven new bowstrings, I should be as weak as any other man," Samson answered laughing.

"Oh, let me try", she laughed, "just to see."

She tied the strings about his arms and then hurried into the other room where the Phillistines were hiding, ready to seize Samson when he was helpless.

"He is tied", she whispered quickly, "Watch!"

She hastened back to Samson.

"The Phillistines are coming", she called to him as if to tease him.

Samson only laughed and started up and broke the strings as if they were thread.

Delilah teased again.

“You mocked me”, she said. “Tell me the truth, how can I bind you so that you cannot get away.”

“If I were to be tied with new ropes that had never been used”, he said, “I would be helpless.”

With strong new ropes Delilah tied him. The Phillistines were in the room waiting as before.

“The Phillistines are coming”, she cried again as if in fun.

This time he broke the ropes even easier than before.

Again Delilah asked him the question and Samson answered teasingly:

“If my hair were woven into a web, I could not get away.”

Straightway Delilah went to her loom and wove his long hair into a strong web.

“The Phillistines are coming”, she cried again

laughing, but as before Samson freed himself easily.

Now Delilah began to fear she might never learn the secret.

“Ah, you do not care for me”, she said, “or you would not mock me so. Please tell me the truth this time.”

She began to sob pitifully and begged Samson till he could not do other than she wished, foolish as it was. To prove his love, Samson did tell her the truth.

“My strength lies in my hair which has never been cut”, he told her.

Delilah waited until Samson had fallen asleep this time and then with comb and scissors of pure gold, she quickly cut off his long hair. Something seemed to tell her that she would not fail this time.

“The Phillistines are coming, Samson,” she called loudly and cruelly, waking him up.

The foolish Samson tried to get away, but his secret had been found out and his strength was



Delilah waited until Samson had fallen asleep.

gone. It was easy now for the Phillistines to bind him and take him to their camp. He had lost his strength by breaking the word of God.

Now that he was at last caught, robbed of his strength, and made a blind prisoner in a prison house, the Phillistines brought him forth, on one of their merry days so that they could make sport of him.

But the sport cost the Phillistines dearly. As Samson stood between two great pillars while his foes were making merry at his capture, he took hold of a pillar in either arm and with a prayer to God for enough strength to pull down the building, he gave a mighty pull at the pillars and down came the entire building.

He had been given his last great strength for the good of his people.





He had given his last great strength.



The Boy in the Temple

HANNAH was so lonely! She and her husband longed for a baby all their own to cherish. They had everything in the world they could wish for except a child and they did so want to hear baby laughter and the patter of merry little feet in their house.

One sunny morning early, when the dew was still sparkling on the grass, they went to a feast in the temple. There was beautiful music there and little girls sang pretty anthems and carols. Hannah loved to hear the little maidens chatter and sing, but it all made her long more and more for a baby.

After the singing was over, Hannah went into the inner temple and there she knelt to pray.

She asked God to send her a little son. She begged the Father in Heaven to hear her prayer and then she did a beautiful sacred thing. She vowed that if God would answer her prayer, she would give the child to Him and the holy temple. She vowed that as soon as he was old enough, she would bring him there to stay forever to work for God.

Eli, the old priest in the temple, saw her as she prayed there. He could see by her sad face that she was asking God for something she wanted very much. Wishing to help and soothe the lady, he went to her.

“Tell me why you cry and feel so sad,” he said.

“Because I am lonely for a little child”, she answered, “and I have asked God to send me a little son.”

Then she told him of her promise to God. When the old priest heard that, he said softly:

“Hush, weep no more. For your goodness may God hear your prayer and send you a little son as you asked.”

Feeling much happier, Hannah left the temple. When she told her husband what she had done, he was very proud of her. They trusted God and felt certain that He would answer the prayer.

Some short time after that day God did answer Hannah's prayer and gave her a fair little baby boy with a little round face as fresh as a rose and with curly yellow ringlets. Hannah was so thankful, she called him "Samuel" because it means "asked of God." She wanted him to carry with him all through life the memories of the kind answer to her prayer.

Quite soon the little boy began to chatter and learned to walk. The mother never forgot her promise to God and on his second birthday she took him to the temple to live with Eli.

"See I have brought my little boy to you to live in the temple and worship God as I promised", she said. "Do you not remember?"

The old priest remembered and he smiled at the little lad.

“I shall love the child”, he said. “I will take good care of him and teach him to read and play the harp.”

Little Samuel grew up fast and became a good obedient child. Every year his father and mother came to see him. Eli was kind to him and they lived a calm, peaceful life.

Samuel loved Eli too. He did as much as he could to make the old priest happy. Eli’s sight was beginning to fade and he was very feeble now. Samuel did as much work as he could. In the morning he would open the doors to let the bright sun in. During the day he tended to the other tasks in the temple. He put fresh oil in the silver lamps and helped keep the temple tidy. At twilight he would close the doors again and light the beautiful lamps and golden candles that burned all night before the altar.

It is told that one evening, just before Eli’s death, God came to Samuel and talked long with him. He told Samuel about the great plans for him (to be a king) and how to rule.

For years and years after Eli's death, Samuel ruled his people kindly and wisely and it is told God always loved and favored him to the end.



Loyal Ruth

IN the little village of gaily painted houses in the land of Moab, there stood a house all steeped in deep sorrow. It was the house of Naomi where the Angel of Death had come and taken away her husband and two sons. With Naomi lived Ruth and Orpah, the widows of her sons. The grief of the two young widows knew almost no bounds but the grief of Naomi seemed even harder to bear.

Long years ago she had planned for the day when she could go back to her beloved Bethlehem with her family, but now she must go back

alone. They had only come to Moab because the harvest in Bethlehem had failed and they were driven to where there was bread to spare. Always they had planned to return. They never liked the heathen Gods of Moab and longed to worship the true God in their own land. Even after her sons had married daughters from the land of Moab, Naomi still planned to go back for Bethlehem was the promised land.

Naomi's heart clung fondly to the old grassy hills where she had played in childhood and where her precious boys had played in babyhood. The sky seemed bluer and the flowers sweeter in that little town. There she had taught her boys to worship. The land of Moab had smiled on them but she yearned for Bethlehem.

Every day Naomi's thoughts drifted with even more longing. Yet if she went she must go alone and she could not think of parting with her son's wives. How good and kind they had been to her! They cared for her as their own mother. If she went back to Bethlehem, there would be

none so kind. She would be all alone except for a few old friends. Not one of her dear family would be there. No one to work for her. How hard it would be to work in the fields again for she had grown old and needed someone to care for her. If Orpah and Ruth could only go too, she thought and then quickly put that thought away because it could never be. They were young and could not leave their father and mother, home and friends to take care of a poor old woman in a strange land so she must go alone. She had promised her God to leave the heathen lands and come back to His people, even if she must come alone.

Not long after that Naomi made ready to go. She called her daughters to bid them farewell.

"There is again plenty to eat in Bethlehem," she said. "It is my native land, the land of my parents, my friends and my God. It is long since we were driven away and I long to return. Go back to your fathers. God will be gracious to you and bring you new husbands, rest, home and loves again, here among your own people.

“No, no,” the daughters cried, “we cannot leave you now. We will go with you.”

Naomi looked upon them kindly.

“You are noble and loyal,” she said, “but you would not be happy there. The people are different, our God is different, I am old and my way must be lonely, but you are young and will find joy again. Stay here and be happy.”

This was the time to prove their love. Orpah turned and went to her father but Ruth would not listen. She loved Naomi dearly and knew that the dear old lady’s only pleasures in life were her daughters and her God. She knew that if they would part even for a few days, the dear old lady would be ill and lonely. Future joys and fortune were all forgotten to Ruth in her desire to be loyal to Naomi.

“Ask me not to leave thee,” Ruth begged, “for where you go, I go. Where you live, I will live. Your God shall be my God, your people my people. I would gladly go amid pain and loneliness to be with you. I seek no happiness that I

cannot share with you. I will never leave you till death do us part."

Good old Naomi's heart leaped for joy. After they came to Bethlehem she told her old friends of the loyal and true heart of her daughter and how she gave up all to be faithful to the old widow.

Good things then, just as now, never fail to bring their reward and there in Bethlehem Ruth found friends and loved ones again. And Ruth's merry songs and laughter made Naomi's old home ring with joy again.



David and His Music

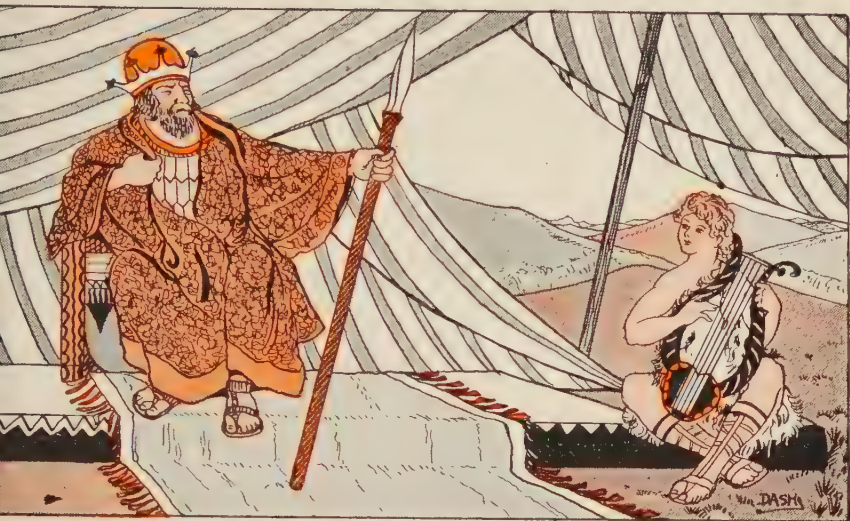
AVID was a little herd boy and lived among the gentle creatures of the fold. His red cheeks were tanned by the warm sun and he had dark curly hair. He knew what the bees hummed and knew all about the birds' travels. There seemed to be none so good and gay and all who knew him loved him. Every day he could be seen up in the mountains or out in the sunny meadows with his lambs. They never needed to be afraid of being lost or tumbling in the brook for they trusted and loved David. Only too well did they remember being saved from a savage old brown bear and on another time from a shaggy yellow lion. David had killed the beasts with his famous sling. Always they could trust David to find the place where the clover grew sweetest and fresh grass tallest and thickest near a cool clear spring. When storms came he always led them to a safe dry shelter.



With his famous sling.

Never at evening when the creatures came down from the hillside would a single one be missing. They were too eager to hear the sweet music which he played to them at twilight. Nestled all around him, as close as possible, he would play to them on his harp and sing his sweetest songs. He sang of the corn in the valleys, the green hills, the birds and the brooks, but most of all he sang of the Saviour who was to come.

As much as David was happy, Saul, the king, was unhappy. Though he lived in a beautiful castle and sat on a throne with a satin pillow, he was very sad. For a long time he had been ill and cross and no one could cheer him. Stern



Always close to the king's throne.

and sulky, he would go about day after day. The only thing that kept him from frowning all day long was a drive in his chariot among the green hills just at twilight.

Now it happened that some of Saul's servants told Saul that a harp player would cheer him with music and drive away his gloom. Saul sent his servants to find a harp player.

One of them returned and told Saul that there was a shepherd lad named David who could play

and sing the sweetest songs. So Saul sent for him.

When Saul had heard him play, he was so charmed by David's music that he made David his armor-bearer.

"My lad," the king said at last, "from this moment you are so dear to me that I cannot bear to lose you. You shall sit by my side always."

He asked David to come to the palace and be his minstrel. How happy David was! He sat always close to the king's throne when he played, but oft times he wished he were out in the hills again, playing to his flocks for he did love them so much.





David and the Giant

FOR a long time David lived in the palace. And then one day the wars came and he was called home. His older brothers had cared for the sheep at home while David was away but when they had to go to the wars, David had to take care of the sheep again.

Days and days and days the wars went on. Often David had to go to the camp to bring his brothers food. When he heard the blast of the trumpets and saw the shining weapons, he wished he were a soldier. If only he were not so young, he thought.

The camp of the enemy was just across the little brook. There were cruel and mighty soldiers, but the man David's king feared most was a fierce and terrible giant. He was as tall as the trees and strong as a lion. He wore a gilded

helmet and a coat of mail that nothing could pierce. By his side hung a sharp sword and in his hand he carried a long spear. For many days the giant had come to the edge of the camp and scornfully roared out:

“Choose a man to come down to me. If he kills me, we will be your servants. If I kill him, you will be our servants. I dare you to send me such a man.”

At hearing these words from the monster, the troops were filled with fear. They would like to have fled. Not one dared to go to fight this man, so stout and fierce of face.

So far David had never seen this great giant, but today as he went to the edge of the camp, the giant came forth. From his lips came loud words of abuse, scorn and ridicule.

Without waiting to tell anyone, David ran to the king.

“What brings you in such haste?” the king asked.

“Oh king,” David said, “I have made up my mind to fight the giant.”

"You, indeed," the king laughed, "why you are only a boy. You must be mad to talk like this. What are you thinking of? Why do you think you could win over that brute?"

"Because God is on our side," David said. "We are God's people and He will not fail us in time of need."

At these words, the king started. It seemed that a young boy had more faith than an old king. Saul turned red with shame when he thought of how he had forgotten to trust God.

"My brave boy," the king said, "Your aim is high, but go and the Lord be with you."

The soldiers tried on helmets and armours, but they were too heavy. David said he could not fight wearing those heavy things. All he carried was his famous little sling as he ran down the hill to the brook.

Saul's army with David at the head now marched out to meet the enemy, all drawn up in forces on the other side. David only bent over and chose five very smooth little pebbles from

the brook and then was ready for the fight.

How the giant laughed when he saw who had come out to meet him. Louder and louder came the jeers as David came nearer.

“Come to me,” the giant called out fiercely, “and I will make of you a feast for the birds when I have done.”

David’s heart was high with courage. He knew he came in the name of his God. There he stood erect, awaiting the giant as if he were a trained little soldier. He took one of his little pebbles and placing it in his sling, aimed straight at the giant’s forehead. The pebble went true to the mark and sank deep into the giant’s head. For a moment the giant stretched his huge arms to stay the fall and then fell slowly upon the ground—dead. The greatest fear of king Saul’s army was now the least.

The waving banners of victory were put up and David was made the king’s armour-bearer and when the king grew too feeble to reign, the kingdom was given to David, the brave soldier of God.



How the giant laughed.



When Esther was a little girl.

Esther the Queen

FVER since Esther was a little tiny girl, her uncle Mordecai had cared for her, and he loved her as his very own. A beautiful child she had been and now when the king's heralds came to every nook and corner of the kingdom to find one fair enough to be queen, Mordecai sent Esther to the palace. He knew that she was so beautiful she would surely meet Ahasherus' favor, and he knew that it help the Hebrews to have a friend for queen.

All these things went through Mordecai's mind as he made ready to take Esther to the king's place.

When all was ready, the beautiful Esther was taken to the royal palace. She was robed in rich flowing silks and fine lace and had the look of a tall slender lily. Yet it was not that that so delighted the king. It was the sweet beauty of her face and her lovely eyes. He thought she was the loveliest lady of all that he had ever seen.

The king held out the jeweled sceptre which was a sign that Esther had found his favor. Esther moved forward with a low bow. The whole court bowed before her as the king chose her for his bride.

"Come and dwell in my palace and wear the golden crown," he said.

The ladies and nobles danced with joy and amid great state Esther was wedded to the king.

After the ceremony the king placed the royal crown upon her head. Esther would have been



Esther would have been very happy.

very happy, indeed, with all the beautiful new clothes and jewels to wear, if it had not been for the plots of a man named Haman. But she could not forget the danger that threatened her people and the cruel treatment they might receive.

The thought of this danger to her people was the only thing that made her unhappy.

Now Haman was a very wicked young prince and he had plotted against the king, as well as being so cruel to the Hebrews.

Esther, knowing this from Mordecai hurried to go to the king, and tell him all these things. The king was very pleased to think Esther cared enough to come to him unbidden and asked her.

“What is thy desire, oh queen? and it shall be granted thee.”

Esther had already planned what she would say and do and when the king asked this but her only request was that he come to a banquet which she had prepared for him. She asked him to bring Haman too. Haman was very vain and it pleased him to think he had found favor with the beautiful queen and was invited to the banquet.

At the banquet the king was happier than ever before. He wished that everyone about him could be happy too, and because he liked Mordecai so well, he wished to honor him for his many good deeds. Turning to Haman, he asked.

“What shall be done unto a man whom the king wishes to honor?”

Haman felt a little thrill of joy. Thinking it was himself that the king wished to honor, he said.

“Gold and silver would be too little for so great a man. Let the royal robes be put on the man and let them put him on the king’s horse and have one of the Royal princes go with him through the streets and call:—

“So it is done to him whom the king wishes to honor.”

Haman was almost overcome when the king then ordered him to do this for Mordecai. Poor Haman, his wicked deeds were returning to him but he had to do as the king bade and now Mordecai’s fame went out through all the land.



The Queens' Banquet

FOR the banquet the queen dressed herself in her royal robes and jewels. Her raven hair was rolled and across her head was a band of gems and pearls.

Through the ivory gates and through the marble arches the junior page boys led the queen into the ball room. The marble walls and floor were shining in the light of the many golden lamps. Golden tripods breathed perfumed incense and the rarest of flowers, in silver vases were on the tables. Yet all this was not half so lovely as Esther. Her beauty was glorious and she spoke in her soft sweet winning voice:

“Hail to the king.”

Ahasherus looked up into her fair face and into her deep dark eyes.

“How lovely she is!” he said to himself.

Haman was there. He was dressed in his best and felt honored to be there with the king and queen. But deep in his heart, as always, he was scheming and thinking of some way in

which he might take the king's place and have a queen as lovely as Esther.

During the feast the king was gay. He was so proud of his new queen. Little did he suspect the sorrow of her heart. As she looked on him with eyes that spoke of deep love for the king who did all to please her, he wished that he could do something to make her love him more. When the time came to make the offer, he said:

"What is thy request, O queen, and it shall be given thee, even to the half of my kingdom."

Of course, the king thought she would ask for more robes and jewels, but she surprised him and said:

"If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it pleases, let my life and the life of my people be given me this night. For we are to be sold. I and my people will be put to death."

"Thy life! thy people!" the king asked. "Explain to me. Who is he that has doomed thee and thy people?"

Esther's eyes gleamed with anger upon Haman.

"It is Haman, this wicked Haman," she called.

When the king learned the whole truth about Haman's wicked plans he arose in wrath and ordered Haman to be hanged, and then he told Esther over and over again that all would be well with her and her people.

After this and during his life the king kept his promise to Esther and gave great powers to Mordecia.





Daniel and the Lions

DANIEL was a prince of Persia. King Darius had made him that because he was so fond of him. He showed Daniel many favors and asked him to live in the great inner court with him. Close to the throne he sat and the king often held his hand in friendship.

Among the other princes was one who was filled with envy. He wished for Daniel's place in the heart of the king. He formed a great hatred for Daniel and forgot all about how Daniel had worked hard as a young man to earn this life of joy and fortune. Night after night this prince would lie awake scheming and planning some way to arouse the anger of the king

against Daniel. Instead the king grew daily more fond of him.

Now it so happened that Daniel was the only man in the whole kingdom who loved and worshipped the true God. All others worshipped idols of stone. The wicked prince knew this and he twisted these facts to make up a wicked story. In the morning he went to the king:

“Oh, king,” he said, “In the kingdom is a man who bows not to thee, but to another. Let us make a law that whosoever shall bow to anyone save thee; Oh king! for thirty days, shall be cast in the den of the lions.”

This pleased the king. It would be good to have everyone in his kingdom bowing and praying to him. Little thinking of what it meant, he put his seal upon the law. Heralds and messengers were sent to all corners of the land. On the street corners and in the market places, all men were told of the new law.

Daniel stood beside the king's throne when the law was made. He knew that he must break

that law if he were to pray to his God as usual every day. Yet he said nothing. Not for one single moment did he think of praying to a king and not to his own God, even if he must be thrown into the den of the lions.

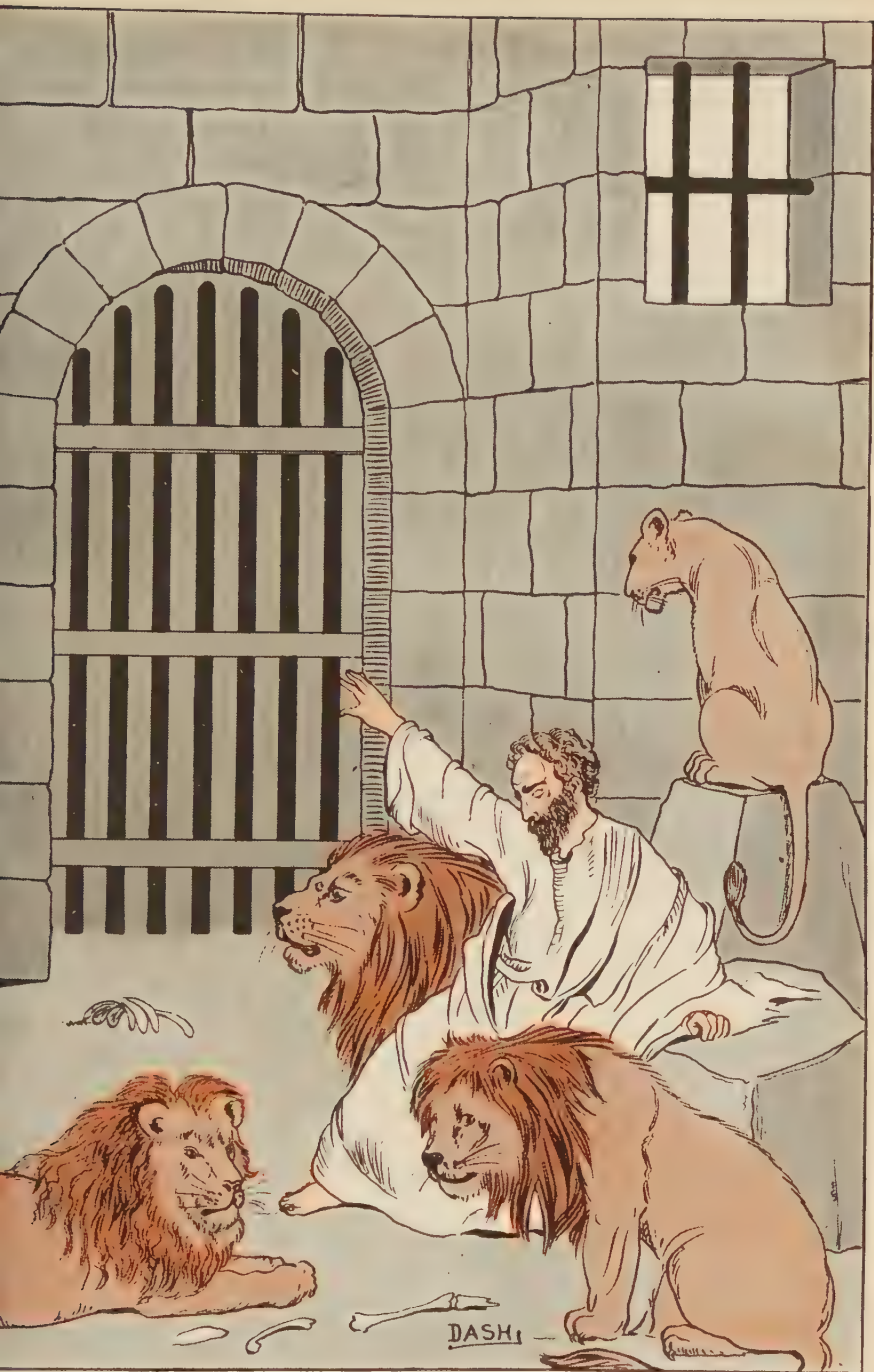
Just as always that evening, he kneeled and prayed to his God. In the morning he prayed again. He knew that someone would see him and tell the king, but that mattered little. It was his God that he wanted to please.

Hiding in a corner, the wicked prince saw Daniel kneel and heard him pray. He ran as fast as he could to tell the king.

“Hast thou not made a law that one who prays to anyone save thee, shall be cast into the den of the lions?”

The king nodded his head. Little did he know what was to follow.

“Daniel has broken the law,” the prince told him. “He prayed to his God. I saw him with my own eyes bowing before his window.”



Crouched gently by his side.

Over the king's face came a deep frown. He loved Daniel and little had he thought the law would harm his favorite.

So in the morning Daniel was carried into the cage of the lions. The keeper opened the grated door of the cage and the great yellow lions stalked in. They were panting, their tongues lolling in their mouths. The great shaggy heads waved to and fro. They had not been fed for days and were hungry.

Many would have cried aloud for mercy, but Daniel showed no sign of fear. He went boldly forward. He never feared the big eyes or big teeth for he had faith that God would take care of him.

As the lions spied him, his hands clasped before him, they rushed at him with dreadful roars. And then quite suddenly they stopped before him. Their tails began to wag and the great beasts crouched gently by his side and began licking his hand with their rough red tongues. Angel hands had guarded Daniel.

A great hush fell over the crowd. The king stood up and called aloud:

“Blessed be the God who hath sent his angel to save his child. I now make a law that every man who speaks an evil word against the God of Daniel shall be cast into this den of lions, for there is no other God but his.”

How pleased Daniel was to think he had won another to God.

FINIS.





STORIES OF JESUS



"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"

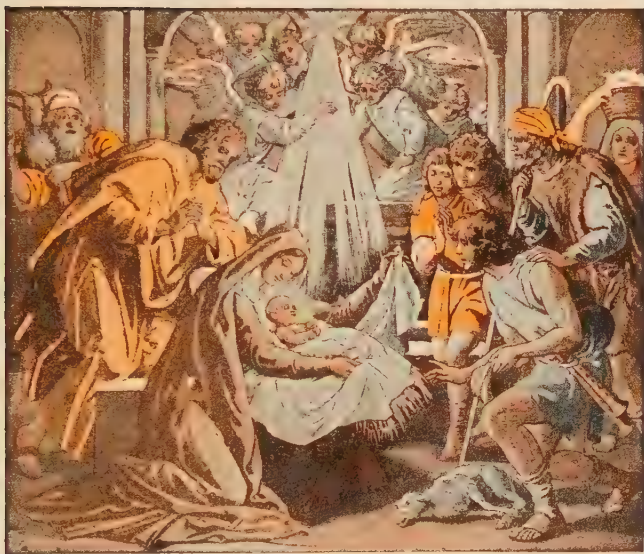
Stories of Jesus

Retold by

A. Gertrude Krottjer

WITH DRAWINGS

FROM FAMOUS PAINTINGS



Also
ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS
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JOSEPH EUGENE DASH

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"The man whom I shall kiss twice"

—From STORY OF JUDAS



The Shepherds

IT was a merry day in the castle of Herod the king. All was laughter, merriment and mirth, and although this had gone on for days and days, they were never before so gay.

But in the kingdom, outside of the castle walls, it was different. The people were treated harshly and most of them lived in poverty and pain. There was only one little gleam of light peeping through the gloom. It was the promise of the Redeemer who was to come to bring God's forgiveness and redeem them to paradise where all would be joy and peace.

Now this promise had been made over and over again down through the ages. All the little grandchildren had been told of it by their grandmothers and so on until everyone knew the old,

old promise. The people never once grew weary and waited and waited for that blessed day. Each time a new baby came, its mother hoped that it might be the Divine Child, the mother who had no babies prayed that if one should come, it might be the Child of Promise.

So it happened that while Mary sat in her room making her wedding gowns, she thought of that beautiful promise. She looked very lovely sitting there in her robes of white, her golden hair falling over her shoulders. She was dreaming of the day soon to come when she would marry Joseph of the Royal David's family.

Farther and farther away Mary's thoughts carried her and at first she did not notice a strange bright light which began to fill the room, but soon it grew so bright that it drew her eyes from her sewing. As she gazed, the light dazzled her and she saw an angel in robes of shining white, with wings reaching from the shoulders to the floor. Nearer and nearer the angel came

and Mary's heart beat a little faster with fear, but when she heard the gentle voice of the angel, deep happiness filled her heart.

"Joy to thee, Mary," the angel voice said. "Hail, full of grace, the Lord loves thee; blessed art thou among women and thou shalt bring forth a son and He shall be the Redeemer and called Jesus."

Quite suddenly the light faded and Mary sat a long time all alone, very happy with the wonder of it all.

Time rolled on and then came a day when Mary and Joseph were ordered by the Roman King to come to Bethlehem to pay their taxes. It was a long journey and when evening came they were weary and worn and began to look for a place to rest until morning. There were many other people who had come to pay their taxes and there was not room for them all so Joseph could find no place in which to sleep. They trudged on and on but still no room could

be found. At last a kind old innkeeper said they might rest in his stable. There the air was cold and the cave dark and damp with only a bed of straw on which to sleep, but they were thankful for even that.

And here upon that night, just as dawn was peeping through the darkness, the promise so often made was kept. The great King left his Kingdom of Heaven and came down to the stable as a tiny infant. It was the great King of whom all the prophets had talked, of whom David had sung to his lambs, the King of the many golden promises.

There were no fine robes in which to dress Him, no royal cradle in which to lay Him, and no kind friends or royal bells to tell of the joy of His coming. There were only swaddling clothes for Him, a manger in which to lie, and only a faithful donkey and some gentle sheep to welcome Him.



And came down to the stable as a tiny infant.

Up among the lonely hills, not very far from where the little Christ Child was born, some shepherds were watching their flocks that night. It was bitter cold out there in the open but the hungry wolves and bears must be kept away from the woolly little lambs as they slept, and so the shepherds sat around great large fires all night and kept as warm as they could. Sometimes they sang and sometimes they told tales as they watched.

It was while they were sitting around this great fire that they heard the sound of voices. They came from above and as they strained their ears to listen and looked up into the starry sky, they saw what seemed to be the gates of Heaven opening and a glorious light shine forth from God's throne. The voices grew clearer and clearer and the light grew larger until they saw that it was a host of snowy-white angels singing sweet music.

The shepherds gazed at one another, trembling with fear at seeing the heavenly vision and hid their faces in their hands as the angels came closer and sang:

“Be not afraid for we bring you tidings of great joy. To you this day in Bethlehem is born Jesus Christ the Redeemer. Glory to God in the Highest. Peace on earth; good will to men.”

They were then told to follow the gleaming star that now appeared in the heavens which would lead them to where the baby lay, and then the white-robed messengers disappeared and there was a deep silence on the hillside.

The shepherds now rose and began speaking in low tones.

“Let us go to Bethlehem,” they said, “and see the word that has come to pass, the promise that has been fulfilled.”

They prepared for the journey following and watching the star. Into their bags they packed little gifts for the new born king. There were only some lamb skins and snow white fleece to wrap the baby in besides some little cakes and milk and fruits, but it was all they had and given with the true love of their hearts.

Over hill and dale they followed the star until it suddenly stopped over the little stable where the Holy Baby lay. Soft music came to their ears again as they knocked at the door, but this time it was the mother Mary singing lullabies.

Such a beautiful child! Around its face was a wondrous light that seemed to fill all the place. It opened its eyes very wide to see the strangers as Mary held the baby close to her heart. She believed that He would be all that the angel had said of Him and she was proud as the shepherds bowed to Him.

After offering the child the gifts they had brought, and praising God for the wonders they



And offering the Child the gifts they had.

had seen and heard, the shepherds went back and told all around of the lonely watch on the hillside and of the glorious vision that had come to them out of the silent sky that winter night.



Three Wise Men

★ ★ ★

N that very night that the shepherds were led by the star to Bethlehem, three wise men in the Far East saw the star as it shone in the heavens. These men were very rich and were also called Magi because they knew all about the stars and their homes in the sky. Thus it was that when they saw this new star, they knew it must be the Star of Promise that would lead to the Redeemer and for which they had been waiting so long.

In the Far East, just as everywhere in the world everyone was anxious to see the new King, so the wise men hurried to get ready for the long journey.

The great star shone down upon them and led them to Jerusalem. There they asked of the King where to find the Heavenly Babe. Herod's

gayety at the castle was for a little while ended then, because he was afraid that his people might want the new King when he grew up and would punish Herod for his cruelty toward them. He grew more and more afraid and all that night he lay awake and cast about in his wicked heart for a plot to rid himself of the child. At last he thought of a wicked scheme. He decided he would ask the wise men to learn exactly where the Child was and then come back to tell him. Then he planned that after the wise men had gone, he would send his cruel soldiers to put the little King to death. All night he planned and schemed and in the morning he sent for the wise men.

“You must learn all you can about the child,” the king said, “and then come back to tell me so that I too may go to worship Him.”

The three wise men promised to do as asked by the king and started out again. The star



DASH,

And started out again.

still shone down to light and smooth their way. It was only six miles to Bethlehem and at mid-day the star stopped over the little stable which was the home of the baby. Joseph opened the door and asked them to rest for he thought they must be very tired. When they were rested he took them to see the child, now lying in the lap of its happy mother. In its little face was the Divine beauty, and seeing the angelic child, the three wise men knelt on the rough stones of the stable floor, their heads bent in lowly worship. There was every sign that this was the Promised King, the Son of God.

Praises to God went up through the roof of the little hut and as a sign that they believed Him to be the King, they offered to the babe gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense. These gifts were only given to baby princes and Mary's heart filled with joy when she saw that these



They offered to the babe gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense.



It was only a short distance now.

three wonderful men believed her little son to be so great.

That dawn an angel appeared to the wise men and told them not to return by way of Herod's castle but to go home another way, so Herod's bad scheme did not turn out as he had planned.

The feasting, song and laughter had stopped in the King's white stone palace and Herod was filled with gloom and regrets. Pacing up and down the long wide courts, pale with rage, he clenched his fists and ground his teeth.

"Those wise men have mocked me," he said, "but there is still another way. I will send out my cruel soldiers to put to death all the young babies. Not one shall live and the new born king will never wear my crown."

But on that very night an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told of Herod's wicked scheme. Joseph told Mary of the dream and though it was still midnight, they wrapped the precious baby in a warm shawl and



Herod was filled with gloom and regret.

stole swiftly and secretly into the silent night to hide from the king's fury. Their hearts were heavy with fear as they hurried on into the darkness, but when the first bright rays of dawn peeped over the hills, God gave them fresh courage and they walked even a little faster.

Toward Egypt they went for there they knew would be safety. The day was one of those spring days that come from behind the stars with gentle winds. The hills and valleys were crowded with flowers, bushes and trees bursting with their first buds. The Little Boy Jesus nestled in the arms of His mother with tender trust as they hurried on, farther and farther away from danger. God was with them and they traveled many miles in perfect safety and comfort.

At nightfall they sat down to rest on the banks of the river and let the cool water wash against their hot wearied feet. The lovely wan-

dering eyes of the baby Jesus began to blink and Mary nestled Him closer in her arms and swayed Him to delicious sleep.

The fields grew darker but a thousands stars began to shine in the sky and when they had rested, out into the sweet-scented spring night they started again. Quite soon in the distance they saw a circle of sparkling lights from the city which told of certain food and shelter. It was only a short distance now and soon the little family were safe in the little town where King Herod could never find or trouble them.





Where Herod could never find them.

Simon and Hannah



T the altar rail the yellow tapers blazed and the tall lamps breathed out their incense. The organ pealed forth and the chorus of children's voices was sweet as honey. Old Simon and Hannah worshipped in their white robes for it was a great day in the temple. All the wee babies were to be brought to the church.

For many years these two old servants had worked for God in this temple. They were very old and feeble now and God had not forgotten to bless them for their years of service. He had promised to show them the divine baby, the Savior, before He would call them to their heavenly home.

As always, old Simon and Hannah talked today of the promise, their blessing. How they

longed to see the baby! As they knelt to pray among the other of God's people, they prayed that the day might soon come.

Hush! the creak of an opening door! Simon and Hannah looked up. A gentle mother with a tiny babe pressed close to her breast was softly entering the church. Hannah rose to greet the mother and babe and led them down the aisle to Simon. What a dear soft and dimpled baby, she thought.

The babe with great wide child eyes began to look all around. Those long rows of pillars and the gilded altar, the burning candles, all was so different from the little old cottage in which He lived.

Old Hannah tenderly placed the babe in the arms of Simon at the altar. He uncovered the tiny head and the baby reached out His tiny

hands. Simon saw baby eyes, brighter than jewels, in the little angel face. A golden light filled the room and for a few moments Simon could hardly raise his eyes from the little face. Then great tears of joy sprang into his eyes and rolled down the withered cheeks.

“Hannah,” the old man called softly. “Hannah, it has come.”

Together they knelt before the altar and raising their eyes to heaven moved their lips in prayer:

“Lord now let Thy servants come to Thee in peace for our eyes have seen Thy promise!”

The bright sun sent its warm rays through the window panes and flooded the altar where they knelt. And then and there, the two old hearts so full of peace and joy, were carried by God to His home in the heavens.



John



JOHN lived a very happy life. He loved nature and played near the streams and in the woods from dawn to moonrise. Sometimes at night he would lie down on the grassy bank of the Jordan under the boughs laden with sweet blossoms and look up at the stars thinking. He would think of new ways in which to tell the stories of his bible, and in the morning he would gather about him a crowd to tell them of Jesus who had come to save them. The crowds listened eagerly for it seemed no one could tell stories just as John did. That was because God had taught John how.

As John grew into manhood, he became a missionary and went about in the wilderness

from early spring to Indian summer, bringing people to God through his stories. At the edge of the wilderness was the river Jordan and there he put the Savior's token of baptism on the foreheads of his people as a symbol of cleansing their hearts from sin. Many believed in him and followed him day after day.

Upon a certain morning as John was baptizing in the Jordan, Jesus, now grown to manhood, came to be baptized. John felt that he was not good enough to do this and said:

"I have more need to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to be baptized by me?"

But Jesus did not listen to that. He bade John do as He asked. Together they waded out into the stream. The sacred rite was finished and then the most wonderful thing happened. There was in the air a sudden rustle, soft, as of the wings and murmur of the turtle doves. John raised his eyes to heaven and there in the sky came a spot of light. It grew whiter and whiter and through the blue of the clouds



Bringing people to God through His stories.

came a host of white doves. Above their heads the doves circled and floated for a moment and then one came gently down, perching on the head of Jesus, and a voice was heard saying:

“This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

Again there was flutter and flapping of wings as up again the doves floated until they were lost in the blue of that bright summer day.

The people standing on the river bank now bowed down and thanked God for what He had shown them.



The Favorites



THE many wonders of Jesus quickly spread abroad. From Galilee and Jerusalem and from about the Jordan they came to hear His words and see His powers. All who knew Him loved Him, but out of His band He chose twelve tall youths as favorites. Everywhere the Master went, they went too. Through all His joy and through all His sorrow these youths never left Him. They had learned to see the beauty of His life and wanted to be like Him. Day after day they followed, learning from Him all they could. They wanted to be taught how to live more like their Master. But most of all they wanted Jesus to teach them how to show others the true way of life too.

On a certain day then, Jesus asked His favorites to come with Him to His beloved mountain so that He might teach them.

“It is to have you to take my place when I am gone that I would like to teach you,” Jesus said.

That day the mountain slopes were green to the top with shrubs and grass. They climbed up the rocky sides, up over the rocky ledges, leaving the village far beneath them. Under a shady oak that over-looked a pleasant lake, they sat down. The air was pure and fresh and gave them the feeling of always wanting to stay right there. The old earth seemed so dull from up there in the blue mystery of the magic mountains.

Up there Jesus began to teach His favorites. First He taught them the lines which we call the beatitudes, or thirteen rules for happiness. After that He taught them the Lord’s prayer and then the Golden Rule and other lessons. How well He told the lessons! It seemed to them that they never could forget now that it seemed so much easier to know how to lead the true life of a Christian.

The happy hours had raced on and by this time darkness had fallen. It seemed all too short. They had listened carefully and now as they came down the mountain to go home, they pondered over the things deep within their hearts. Tomorrow they would go to teach their brothers in the valley.



Peter, John and James

★ ★ ★

HE way up the mountain was hard and rough, but Peter, John and James willingly followed the Master. As they climbed the steep sides, the sun was setting and casting a golden rose color over the huge rocks and wild flowers that grew on every side.

At length they reached their little place of worship. The sky was dark blue now and lighted by thousands and thousands of little stars. All was so still that the old earth seemed hundreds of miles away.

There in the splendid silence they all knelt to pray. A long time they stayed there, until at last the three favorites grew drowsy and fell sound asleep.

They had really been asleep a long time, though it only seemed a moment, when they



Willingly followed the Master.

were awakened by a wondrous thing. The space where Jesus knelt grew a golden light. It grew brighter and brighter as the seconds passed and then so dazzling and wonderful that it nearly blinded them. The next moment they started back a little in wonder as from that spot of wondrous light came three men. Their robes were as radiant as the sun and a halo encircled their heads. They spoke in a low calm voice.

"These are the voices of Moses and Elijah," Peter whispered, and as they looked and listened they seemed to forget the world below them. They thought they would like nothing better than to spend their life there, away from sin and evil.

Peter spoke to the Master at last.

"Master," he said, "It is good to be here. Let us make three tents in which to live so we need never leave. One for Thee, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

But while he was still speaking, a cloud, looking like a bundle of silvery mist, came over them.

The favorites became afraid, but the voice, as soft as down, that now spoke, soothed them.

"This is my beloved son," the voice said, "Hearken to Him."

Scarcely were the words spoken when the cloud rose up and joined the floating city of clouds above and the favorites were alone with Jesus as before.

Meanwhile a dawning day had come and they went slowly back down the rugged stone stair-way, a greater love for their Master born in their hearts.



The Poor Woman



FROM up among the lonely hills Jesus came one morning and quietly entered the temple to pray. A solemn stillness brooded at the altar, but presently a wave of voices broke upon the silence and there was loud shouting in the court. Looking out Jesus saw a crowd of proud scribes come down the broad path scolding and shouting. Between them they dragged a woman who cried pitifully for mercy.

“Master, Master,” they called as they saw Him. “This is a wicked woman. Now Moses in the law told us to stone such a one, but what sayest Thou?”

Jesus did not answer. He knelt down and pretended to write with his fingers on the ground



Pretended to write with His fingers.

as if he did not hear them. The people knew the forgiveness in Jesus' heart and if he were to forgive this sinful woman they could say that he had broken the law of Moses. It was this that made Jesus wait to answer, while he cast about in his mind what to say.

Again and again the people asked Him, their voices growing louder and louder. Jesus then raised up His kind face and said sternly:

"Hush! Hush! He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her."

Again He knelt and pretended to write on the ground.

These kind words which Jesus spoke filled the scribes with shame. They had been foolish enough to believe that Christ might think they were without sin themselves, and could doom this poor woman.

The woman trembled with fear as the crowd left the courtyard and Jesus saw great large tears falling from her closed eyes. He longed

to soothe and comfort her for he saw that she was truly sorry for her sins. Putting His hand on her shoulder, He said gently:

“Go and sin no more. If thy soul be wounded, we shall heal it with the balm of our blessed faith.”



The Good Samaritan



ONE of the many ways by which Jesus taught His lessons was by telling stories. The story of the Good Samaritan was told by Jesus to teach us to love our neighbors and to do to them as we would like to have them do to us.

It was the story of a Levite man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho. The way lay through lonely places and a dark woods and it was known that many robbers lived in that woods. The Levite had heard of the cruel things the robbers often did and he was a little timid. The rustle of the bushes frightened him and each time a loose stone slipped from beneath his feet, he would look about, fearing that someone was following after him.

Hardly had he entered into the deep of the woods, when he saw just what he had feared. From behind the trees came black figures, creeping toward him. They were muffled in long black robes with hoods drawn over their faces.

Nearly mad with fear as they seized him he struggled to become free, but they bound and beat him with sticks. After robbing him, they left him, wounded and bleeding by the wayside.

It was not long before a Levite priest came that way.

“Surely the priest will help me,” the wounded man said to himself. “He will not leave me here to die.”

But the priest only ran away from the sight. He was afraid the robbers might seize him also.

In a few moments another man came by, a singer in the priest’s choir. The wounded man could hardly speak or open his eyes. Oh! how he wished that the singer would help him. But instead the man only looked a moment, crossed

to the other side of the road and then ran, even faster than the priest had run.

But bye and bye, when all hope had faded, a Samaritan came over the road. Now the Samaritans were of a different race and faith and had been treated cruelly by the Levites, but the good Samaritan held no dark thoughts in his mind. His heart filled with pity and he gently lifted the wounded man from the hard ground. He washed the wounds with clear water that he carried in his pouch, and poured on healing oil. Then he wrapped the Levite in a warm cloak and placed him on his own faithful old donkey. Away he hurried with the wounded one to an inn. All through the night, while the wounded man slept, the Samaritan watched and cared for him. Even when morning came he would not leave the poor man in danger.

“Here is money,” he said to the inn-keeper. “Take good care and when I return in a few



The good Samaritan.

days, I will gladly repay you if you should need to use more money."

With these words the Samaritan left, feeling joyful in having helped the poor stranger.





"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

The Little Children



JESUS was in the temple healing and teaching his lessons through stories. All the people thronged to hear the wonderful things He told. Many thought that to just touch His garments meant that they were forever safe and well.

Mothers brought their children to Him to be healed. How Jesus loved the little children! Little lame boys and girls were made well. Others who were blind and had never seen the bright sunshine or the stars or the moon were made to see again. Sometimes Jesus stopped to tell the children beautiful tales. Always He told of the greatest joys coming from little services



Mothers brought their children to Him.

done for others and of God and His paradise where all were eternally happy.

The favorites thought that the children should not be allowed in the vast multitude for both inside and all about the temple were crowds of grown-ups, all anxious to hear and see Jesus.

This grieved Jesus deeply because He knew how very close little children are to God and how pure their little hearts are. He knew that if grown ups would only let God dwell in their hearts as He dwells in the hearts of little children, they would be as happy and as contented as the little children are.

Jesus scolded the favorites and took the little children in His arms. He asked that all the other little boys and girls be brought to Him. Some leaned against His knees and tiny tots climbed up in His lap. Then He blessed them one by one, saying:

“Suffer the little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.”



And the people went home.

Turning to the people, he said, "Except as ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

That was a beautiful lesson and the people went home having learned a new way to help reach the kingdom of heaven.



Water and Wine

★ ★ ★

N Cana and Galilee this mid-summer morning, there was a wedding. All the bells in the city rang out as the guests trailed over the yellow stones of the courtyard from the church. The little pages blew their horns and the crowd came down the path laughing and singing. In their arms they carried the bridal gifts of pearls and jewels.

It so happened that Jesus and His mother were among the wedding guests. They had helped make ready the handsome dwelling for the feast. The dining hall blazed with splendor. The little cakes made of sugar and plums and things, and the fruits and nuts were all ready to be served. There were pretty baskets of

grapes and the goblets for the wine were set at the place.

It was the custom to serve wine in those days as soon as the guests arrived, and the maids were beginning to bring in the large silver pitchers. After a glass or two had been filled, they were surprised to see that the pitchers had become empty. This was considered very bad manners and the bride and groom would be in very bad graces unless more wine could be found at once.

“More wine!” the guests called. “More wine!”

By this time some of the guests were already beginning to make fun of the bridegroom and Jesus felt very sorry for him.

And now came the time for the first of the many wonders of the Master.

“What shall we do?” Jesus’ mother asked. “Something must be done at once.”

She had so much faith in her son that she was sure that even now he would find some way out.

“Bring to me the six large water jars that stand at the door,” Jesus answered, and away the servants hurried.

The jars were heavy because they were filled to the top with water, but it only took a little while to bring them in.

Jesus mother was so happy. She remembered the many signs in her son’s childhood that proved Him to be the messenger of God. Nothing could please her more than to have the guests see His greatness too.

The huge jars were placed beside Jesus. He simply raised His eyes to Heaven, moved His lips in silent prayer, and then began to fill the goblets. Not with water, but with grape red wine!





The jars were placed beside Jesus.

The Wild Sea



IN the little fishing village, the fishermen were just turning their nets full of silvery fish when Jesus and his favorites came. They had come to get a boat in which to row out to sea. Only there could they find the much needed rest. The day had been filled with tasks of love, but evening found them all very weary.

No sooner had Jesus lay down to rest than a deep sleep came over Him. The rowers steered the boat out a little way and they too lay down to rest.

Toward midnight the men were awakened by a strange rumbling. Looking up they saw black clouds hurrying from their hiding places in the

sky. A little fear pinched their hearts for they had heard of furious storms on that little sea. The clouds grew even blacker and the angry waves began to beat against the boat. The darkness grew more and more dense as the waves lashed higher and higher. Their courage sank. Yet through it all, Jesus slumbered on. The winds howled, the waves roared. The ever rising tempest shrieked aloud. The men lay upon their oars in fear, still Jesus slept on.

“Be brave,” they told themselves, “Jesus is with us!”

Now the loud peals of thunder seemed to tear the clouds into shreds. The flashes of lightning lighted up all with a glare. The angry waves whirled around in white sheets of foam, chilling the favorites with the spray. And yet Jesus did not awaken.

As they were very much afraid, the favorites tried to awaken Jesus, but their voices could not



"Master, Master, save us, for we perish."

be heard above the roar of the storm. Terrified, they shook him, shrieking

“Master, Master, save us, for we perish.”

They expected Him to rise up hurriedly and be alarmed, but He only partly opened his eyes and looked about. They fell on their knees.

“Master, Master,” they cried again, save us. Do not leave us in this misery to die among the wild seas.”

Jesus stood up and His face grew grave.

“Oh ye of little faith,” He said, “Why are ye so fearful?”

He stretched out his hand over the waves and bade them be still.” Scarcely had the words left His mouth when there was a hush, stillness and peace. The roar of the winds became a gentle murmur. The choppy sea calmed and spread itself out as smooth as a mirror.

Over the vast gray sea the stars began to twinkle and the lights in the fishermen’s cot-



tages, tucked away among the rocks on the shore, could now be seen again.

The men gazed at one another.

“Truly this is the Son of God,” they said to each other. “He has the power to bind even the winds and the waves and make them do His bidding.”

The Loaves and Fishes



THE sun had set and twilight stole over the trail that led to the little fishing village. Jesus with His favorites and band of followers had been away all day giving His healing cure to the sick and suffering and they were weary and worn as they traveled the trail looking for a grassy field in which to rest. It was past the supper hour but they could not eat for the food which they had carried in their baskets that morning had all been eaten.

As the hungry cries of the little children reached the ears of the favorites, Phillip said to Jesus:

“Send the people into the villages to buy food for they have nothing to eat.”

Jesus was touched with pity for them.

“Let us give them food,” he said.

“We cannot,” Phillip said, “for there are five thousand people and there are only five loaves of bread and two small fishes in the basket of one of our little boys.”

“Bring the baskets to me,” Jesus said, “and bring the empty baskets too. Then tell the people to sit on the green grass in rows.”

So Phillip hastened to find the little boy and quickly brought back the baskets.

The host of people looked on in wonder as Christ raised his eyes to Heaven, and moved His lips in silent prayer. Taking the loaves and fishes, He blessed them, and with love and kindness beaming from His eyes, He gave the basket to his favorites and told them to pass the food around.

The crowd was filled with wonder and awe as they saw that the baskets did not seem to become empty but always to fill up again.

When all had been fed, Jesus asked the favorites to gather what was left and there were still twelve full baskets.

The vast crowd now saw His great Divine power and began murmuring and saying among themselves:

“This is of a truth that prophet that shall come into the world.”

And they sang praises and believed in Him.





The Fishermen

SIMON and Andrew, James and John and their father Zebedee lived by the Sea of Galilee. They were fishermen but they had given up their work to follow Jesus and help in teaching the gospel. Sometimes at night they would cast their nets into the sea and in the morning take the fish they had caught to market. This was their way of earning money to buy food.

Day had just dawned and the fishermen were drawing up their nets. How they loved to turn

the nets and see the many fish that had been hidden in the depths of the sea! But this morning the men were sad and discouraged for though they had fished all night, not a single fish had tangled itself in the net. It meant that they would get no money and might even have to go hungry.

Just as they were drawing the boat upon the shore, they saw Jesus standing there. He saw they were discouraged and wanted to cheer them.

“Put out into the deep water and cast your nets on the right side of the boat,” Jesus said.

“Master,” Simon answered, “We have fished all night and not one fish has been caught, but if Thou sayest, we will let down our nets once more.”

So saying they pushed the boat from the shore into the water again as Jesus bade them. All of a sudden the water grew troubled and nearly tipped the boat, and as they gazed into the dark green sea, they felt the net grow heavy with fish.



Simon and Andrew could hardly draw up the net.

They were so many that Simon and Andrew could hardly draw up the net and they feared it would break. When they turned the fish into the boats, it seemed as if it must sink with its new weight.

Again the divine power had shown itself to these men and they were happy that Jesus was their wonderful Leader.

The Old Cripple



T the gate of the temple the old cripple sat all huddled up. Pale and faded and clad in rags, he begged daily. Always he was thankful for only the little scraps thrown at him, but today he was softly sobbing, his face buried in his hands, for there was not even enough in his cup to buy tomorrow's bread. The people had jeered at him and passed him by.

As Peter and John came up the path, the lame man felt a little thrill of hope. He hobbled toward them and threw himself upon the earth before them sobbing heart-brokenly.

"Have mercy," he begged.

Peter's heart was filled with pity. If only the Master were here, he thought, he would heal

the poor beggar. He remembered how Jesus had gone through the narrow lanes to the humble peasants and among the poor fishermen, seeking to heal and to save. If only he had the power to cure that wretched man, he thought again.

“Give that I may buy bread,” the man cried.

Peter looked down at him tenderly.

“Gold and silver have I none,” Peter answered, “but such as I have I give to thee freely.”

Lifting his eyes to heaven, he prayed aloud:

“O Father in Heaven, prove to these people Thy greatness. Give me the power to heal this poor man that they may praise Thee.”

Filled with a great faith Peter looked down on the man saying:

“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”



Looked down on the man saying,

With these words Peter lifted the man by his right hand and led him to the temple. He was well and sound. The poor beggar could hardly believe it; it seemed he must be dreaming.

Tears of gratefulness sprang into the beggar's eyes.

"O Thou Holy One, O Thou sign of God's power. Thou has healed me," he cried gladly.

Carols of joy that made the temple ring, sprang from his lips, all in praise of God.

The crowd in the temple was stirred and moved. They began gathering around Peter and praising him. Peter did not like that.

"Oh, ye men of little faith," he said, "as if by my own power of holiness this was done! After the proof of my Master's many wonders, can you think this strange?"

The Sick Child



JAIRUS, the Chief Ruler at Capernaum, was very sad because his little daughter was very ill. She was a much-beloved child and although every doctor in the land had been called, they could only shake their heads and say:

“The hope for her life is very dim.”

It was then that Jairus heard of the many wonders of the Master and instantly the ruler set out to find Jesus.

Crowds were gathered in the temple, listening and watching, when Jairus came. As the ruler listened, a strong faith seemed to spring up in

him, and making his way to Jesus, he fell at His feet, saying anxiously:

“Master, my little daughter lieth at the point of death. Come and lay Thy hands upon her that she may be healed and shall live.”

Jairus spoke in such tones of sadness that Jesus' sympathy went out to him and He started home with the father at once.

The crowds followed Jesus wherever He went, even when called on such an errand. They never stopped bringing their friends and relatives who were ill. On the way to the ruler's house, a woman who had been ill for twelve years came to ask Jesus to make her well and Jesus, seeing her great faith in Him, was filled with a gentle pity and stopped to cure her.

Poor Jairus. He could not understand why Jesus would stop for this. He felt that this cure could wait, but that in the case of his little girl, it was a matter of life and death and a

moment's delay might mean that it would be too late. Yet he said nothing.

They made their way through the crowds now and were just on their way again, when one of Jairus' servants came to meet him with sad news:

"Thy daughter is dead," the servant said, "Trouble now the Master no more."

Jairus was heartbroken. He wrung his hands and cried out in grief, but Jesus comforted him.

"Be not afraid," Jesus said, "only believe."

Hearing these words, Jairus faith sprang up again and he was full of new hope. They hurried on to the home and there, just as the servant had said, they found the little girl had died. All around the house the servants were weeping and mourning for the little girl they loved so well. Jesus saw this and tried to soothe their anguish, saying solemnly:

"Why do you weep? The child is not dead but only sleepeth." Instead of believing and



They made their way through the crowds.

being glad, they only laughed and scorned Him. This must have pained the tender Jesus, but He showed no sign. He sent all the servants out of the room and only Jairus remained. Then moving to where the little girl lay, and taking one of the daughter's little white hands in His, Jesus said tenderly:

“Little girl, I say unto you, arise.”

God had again shown His wonderful power that the people might know Him. As if the little girl had only been asleep, she opened her eyes and sat up, and began to speak.

Jairus was so happy he offered Jesus all his wealth, but Jesus would not listen. So the Master went on His way again and Jairus stood long looking after Him, believing that He was indeed the Son of God.



Lazarus



THERE was for many years in Bethany a little cottage famed for the home of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha. They were the most kindly of hosts and Jesus spent many pleasant hours of pleasant chatter there as a guest. Love dwelled in that happy home and all who came felt merry and cheery.

But the little group came to see some very sad days. Lazarus became so ill that it was feared he could not live much longer. The loving sisters were wrapped in grief.

“If Jesus were only here,” Martha said with a sad smile, “Lazarus would never leave us. Jesus would give us strength to bear our sorrow.”

"I will seek Him," a neighbor said kindly.

In great haste the man went in search of the Master. When he had found Him and told Him the sad news, Jesus was grieved. He had not known before how much He really loved that little family. Without waiting for anything, Jesus made ready to go.

"I must hurry to Bethany," He told His favorites, "Lazarus needs me at once."

"But it would be a rash and foolish thing," they replied, "the Jews are seeking to slay Thee and they will harm Thee if they find Thee there."

Jesus shook His head.

"There is no time to think of that," he said, and in a few moments was off to the little town.

At the gate of Bethany, Martha came to meet the Master. Her face was very, very sad and her eyes full of tears as she raised them to the Master.



In great haste the man went in search of the Master.

"Dear Lord, if Thou hadst been here our brother would not have died," she sobbed. "He has already been laid away in his grave."

Jesus laid a tender hand upon the fair head of Martha.

"Weep no more, my friend," the Master said, "Thy brother is not dead, he only sleeps."

So wholly did she believe in her Master that her eyes now filled with a light of new hope.

"Canst Thou bring Him back to life again?" she asked.

"Thy faith is strong," Jesus went on, "If thou wilt only believe, thou shalt see the glory of God."

With lighter steps Martha led the way to the quiet little churchyard. They hurried to the tomb and rolled away the great stone that had been placed before it. Martha clung to the Master as if she were afraid He might leave her. In her pleading eyes He saw her great faith.



The great stone that had been placed before it.

Then raising His eyes to heaven, He said softly:

“Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest me—that they may believe that Thou didst send me.”

And in a voice as clear as a bell, He called:

“Lazarus come forth.”

At these words Death fled from the tomb like a cold grey mist from the sea and the tomb opened as Lazarus stepped forth.



The Last Supper



IT was the day of the feast of the Pass-Over, a day of gladness and solemn joy. Praises and hymns were being sung and in the hearts of the people was peace and joy, but the heart of the Master was weighed down with grief. The people were weaving wicked plots against Him. He knew that He could flee, go where they could never find Him, but that would not be noble. And too, He did so want to eat the last feast with His loved ones.

Toward evening He gathered His favorites together and they went to the banquet room. Everything had been made ready by Peter and John. There was a long table and low sofas were placed all about. On the table was a nice

fresh cover and it was laid with dinner silver. There were dishes of roast lamb, trays of bread and fruit and glasses of red wine.

Jesus sat at the head of the table, his favorites all around. The joy which marked the feast for them, was all gloom for Jesus. It seemed to grow as the supper went on. His mind was too full of what was about to happen. He knew all about the agony He must go through, all about the wicked schemes. How bitter the next few days would be for Him!

The others had nearly finished their supper by this time but Jesus had not even touched the food. Seeing this, the favorites were troubled.

“Come eat and be merry,” they all said.

Jesus was full of sorrow! How could He be merry? He only shook His head and smiled sadly. Then reaching for the bread tray, He did a very strange thing. He broke the bread into bits and passed it to the men. From his lips came softly the saddest of words:

“This is my body which shall be given for you,” He said. “Eat this in remembrance of me.”

After that Jesus took a cup of wine, and giving thanks to God, He said even more softly and sadly:

“This is my blood which is shed for you. Drink in remembrance of me.”

He passed the cup to each one. They all drank as He told them, yet no one spoke a word. It was plain that He was in deep sorrow. Never before had they seen him quite like this. All was silent. They waited for their Master to speak.

At last he spoke.

“Do not be troubled,” He said. “Believe in me, for only a little while and I will be with you no longer.”

The words choked Him a little. He caught His breath and they saw tears come into the big sad eyes. Even stranger words came now.

“But a little while and one of you shall turn traitor to me,” He went on.

They remembered that the Roman’s sought His life, but who among the favorites would be so base as to turn traitor? It could not be, they thought. Was one in their midst a spy?

“Is it I? Is it I? they all cried.

But Jesus did not answer. Even at that last moment He hoped that the sinful one would change. He wished that it would all turn out like a dream. Perhaps Judas would prove to be not half so bad as he seemed.

Sad were the hearts of the favorites this night. They had learned to love Him with a new love. He saw their true feelings and now He talked to them tenderly. He told them of how He would soon go to His Father in Heaven to make ready a place of His loved ones. And strangely enough, He told of going, but coming back again.



They had learned to love Him.

There were many things the favorites could not understand, but they listened eagerly. They thought of the blind eyes He had opened, the lame ones He had healed. How many bruised and cut hearts had been healed by the balm of His words! The thought of parting brought tears to their eyes. How lonely the days would be without their dear Master!

But by this time many hours had gone by and it was time to leave.



Peters Deed



IN the dead still night, Peter and the Master wandered down the road. They loved each other dearly and Peter could not bear to think of parting. How dreary the future without his beloved!

“I would that I could follow Thee,” Peter said. “I would that I could lay down my life for Thee.”

Looking at Peter sadly, Jesus said. “Oh Peter! would that I could believe Thee, but verily, the cock shall not crow before Thou wilt have said three times that Thou has never known me.”

These words were spoken in such sadness that they made Peter catch his breath for a second. What strange words, he thought.

* * * * *

The night had passed and in those terrible hours, they had taken the Master. With weary steps Peter followed the buzzing crowd. How splendid his dear Master had been! Every kind action that had been done by his Jesus, every kind word spoken, it all came back to him now.

The crowd had now reached the home of the high priest and here they stopped. It was still dark, only a little past the hours of midnight, but the whole house was astir. The crowds sat here and there, resting. Peter rested too, but scarcely had he sat down, than a man, remembering that he had seen Peter with Jesus, called out hotly:

“Take this vile man away. Truly he is one of Jesus’ friends.”



Scarcely had he sat down.

The crowd came forward. Quickly thinking of what they would do if they found him out, Peter answered in peril:

“I know Him not,” and he moved away.

Going on down the street, Peter stopped again—at an inn this time. It had grown cold and the red glow of the bright charcoal fire made the inn look cheerful. Again Peter sat down to rest, but no sooner had he been seated, than a servant saw him:

“Thou art a friend of the accused,” the servant said.

Peter was again afraid.

“Truly I know Him not,” he said again loudly.

But the flames of the fire showed the favorite’s face all too plainly, and another man saw him.

“It is true. This man was a friend of Jesus.”

Again Peter answered: “I do not even know the man of whom you speak.”

The first faint rays of dawn had now come and a cock out in the barnyard crowed loudly over the new mid-summer morning. As the sound reached Peter's ears, the truth came upon him and he remembered the words of a few hours before. "The cock shall not crow before Thou wilt have said three times that Thou has never known me."

Poor Peter! He had not done the one little thing he could have, and that was say that he was a friend of his Master. He bowed himself humbly, ashamed, and asked to be forgiven for that shameful deed. And in that moment there seemed to come to him the flame of the Holy Spirit to take away his sin.



Judas

HE cruel priests sat in the inner temple, waiting for Judas when the door slowly opened and he came in. He was wrapped in a long dark coat with a hood that covered his face for he did not want to be seen entering there. He trembled and seemed frightened. He was miserable and felt guilty, weary of his treachery already.

“It is a rash and foolish thing,” he told the priests, “after the way they honored Jesus yesterday. The shouts of joy have scarcely left the city.”

“Perhaps we can never take him,” said they.

“Oh, yes,” he answered, “I have only just left Him and He tarries in the Garden of Gethsemane. There in the darkness you can seize Him.”

“But how shall we know Him there in the darkness?” they asked.

“In this way,” Judas answered. “Remember, the man whom I shall kiss twice, that is He. Take Him and lead Him away.”

Just as Judas had said, Jesus did go to Gethsemane that night. Lonely and heart-broken, He has asked His favorites to stay with Him.

“Tarry here and watch with me,” He said.

Oh, the agony of those last bitter hours! So that none could see the great sorrow Jesus sought a darker spot. The great sorrow seemed to crush Him down.

“Father,” He cried, “Oh that this hour may pass from me. But not as I will, only as Thou wilt.”

Restless in His agony he again went to His favorites, but sleep had come upon them.

“Peter,” He said, “Couldst Thou not watch with me only one hour?”

Alone He had to go back into the gloom. He must bear it alone. As He prayed now, fresh courage seemed to come to help Him bear what He knew must now come. Though Judas thought to hide his crime, it was known by the Master.

So when the tramp of feet came over the bridge that led to Gethsemane, Jesus was ready. The torches as they flickered through the trees did not frighten Him, though He knew they were carried by the brutal Roman soldiers. Instead of running away, He went forward to meet them.

“Master, Master!” Judas cried as Jesus came close, and then ran to kiss Him. Two kisses on the right cheek Judas gave Him. The base deed! It came like a stab to Jesus. The soldiers waiting in the darkness, rushed forward. Their swords clanked and with cruel, rough hands they dragged Him away. The kindly Jesus grieved deeply over the rough treatment, but only for

His people. The grief for the sins of His people was far deeper than from the suffering they caused Him.





Before Pilate



AT daybreak the prisoner was brought to Pilate, the governor. Weary and sick at heart, Jesus treaded with heavy feet into the court-room. As He passed down the aisle a guard reached out and struck Him. He! the only one among them without sin to be so cruelly treated.

Before the governor Jesus was now placed.

“Upon what charge do you try this man?” the Governor asked of the crowd in the court-room.

“He aims to overthrow the kingdom saying that He is the King,” they shouted.

Pilate looked upon the sad face of Jesus. In his own heart he felt kindly toward the Master

and would have liked to set Him free. Charge after charge was flung against the prisoner, each one more false, and yet Pilate did not find Him guilty.

“I find no fault in Him at all,” he said.

Try as the angry throng would, they could prove no fault and Pilate left the room. He would try the prisoner no longer. How good this must have seemed to the friends of Jesus who were there. A bright new hope arose in their hearts.

The mad throng grew restless. Something must be done to prove the prisoner guilty or He might be released. Even if it be done by telling base untruths, they tried to find some wrong He had done. In the hearts of those who hated Him, new and wicked plots were being made, but for a long time no one dared speak. Yet He must not be set free. If He were, He would rise even higher among them and it was that that they feared.

Now from the rear of the room came the words of doom.

“He boasts that He is the Son of God,” rang out clearly.

That was enough. There was no need for more reason to send Jesus to the cross. The long trial was ended. A man who dared to say that in those olden days was doomed to a cruel death.

Caiaphas, the high priest, still wanted to be just. He dared not send this man to death on false charges.

“Sayest Thou that Thou art the Son of God?” he asked sharply.

“I am the Son of God,” Jesus answered boldly.

All heard the words plainly and Jesus knew the words would send Him to the cross. Within a moment they had seized Him and dragged Him out. A crown of sharp thorns was pressed

on His head so hard that the blood trickled over His face and they covered him with a cast off robe of purple and cast off jewelry. Down the street they dragged Him, shouting mockingly:

“Hail, the self made King of the Jews.”





A crown of sharp thorns was pressed on his head.

On the Cross



ALVARY was only a little way—just outside the city gate. As Jesus dragged His weary feet over the path, He knew that He would never tread that way again. He was being led to the place of death. Before Him marched the stout and fierce Roman soldiers. In their arms they carried the spade and the hammer and nails for the cross. After Him came the throngs, hooting and shouting.

Weighed down, His body almost bent to the ground by the cross, it seemed Christ could go no farther. He swayed this way and that until His bruised shoulders could bear the burden no longer and he sank upon the ground. The



Could bear the burden no longer.

guards forced Him up with cuffs and blows and lashes of the whip.

At last an unknown man, seeing the dear Master in such agony, rushed to His side and carried the cross for Him. The poor and the maimed whom He had once helped turned kindly tear-stained faces. Women by the side of the path, whose children He had blessed, looked on in pity. It was all so sad.

When they had come to the place, the soldiers fastened Jesus to the cross. With the heavy hammers they drove long sharp nails through His hands and feet. As the nails pierced His hands, He cried out:

“Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Always His thoughts were of His people, even in this terrible hour. The cross was raised and fastened in the ground and the body of Jesus hung high, where it would be seen by all. Above

His head in scorn they nailed a card reading: "The King of the Jews." The bitter jibes and sneers could be heard from all sides.

The cruel work was over but Jesus's suffering had only just begun. Still more they mocked and scorned Him.

"If Thou art the King of the Jews, save Thyself," they cried.

Jesus heard all the bitter words, but they hurt Him little now. The greatest of all His deeds was not yet done. He had not yet died for those people who so cruelly treated Him.

Midday had passed and afternoon had come, the time when the sky was the bluest. Suddenly clouds, as dark as midnight, crept over the sun. A strange rumbling was heard and felt. Never before had this happened and terror came on. The heavens seemed to frown on the awful deed. The skies grew blacker and suddenly there was a flash of blinding light and a

loud crash. The curtain that hung in the Holy of Holies in the temple was torn into shreds. The people were stunned and fled away.

Upon His cross, Jesus understood, but He paid no heed. His mind and heart were filled with other things. None will ever know through what agony he passed in those dark moments. We only know that He cried aloud:

“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

It seemed as if His Father in Heaven who had always been so close had gone away and left Him alone. He had been able to bear the cruel blows and words but now His heart seemed to burst.

The end was very near now. Only a few moments of deep silence and the His lips came a painful whisper.

“It is finished.”



Found his home of the blessed.

His great suffering and agony and His great good work—all was over. He had done all that was needed to save the whole world from sin. Only one more sigh and His tired soul found His home of the Blessed.





The Angel at the Tomb.

Easter Morning



HEY had buried Him in the Garden of Joseph, in a tomb among the roses. It was quiet and cool there and those who loved Him might come to visit His resting place. Mary Magdalene was the first.

Dawn had just sent its first pink rays across the sky when she reached the garden. She had brought with her sweet spices, costly oils and baskets of flowers. This would be her last little kindness to Him who now lay dead and buried. As she thought of it all, the tears came into her eyes and with grief in her heart she went on.

Hardly had she reached the garden gate when she felt the ground shake beneath her feet. A rumble as in an earthquake was heard. Frightened she paused for a moment, but soon

all was still again. The birds sang in wildest joy as they floated over the buds and flowers, and she went on again.

There were the gardener and the guards that had been placed at the tomb, but what was wrong? Pale as death, they rattled on about something she could not understand. Then quick as a flash, she knew. They were speaking of something that had happened to her beloved Master. She crept closer and looking carefully, she saw the empty tomb. The robes in which they had wrapped Him were there but the body was gone. She thought she must be wrong and looked again. She stood for some time keeping her eyes on the tomb. As she thought that she could never see His beloved face again, or even touch Him, though in death, she burst into weeping. Never, never to see Him again! She stooped down to look once more into the tomb.

It had changed! Two silver-winged angels had come and sat where the robes had lain. She was too shocked to speak and turned about.

She would not leave until she knew what had been done with the body. There she thought she saw the gardener again and she started to ask him, but he spoke to her first.

“Why do you weep?” he asked. The gentle kind words gave her a little hope. Her lips quivered.

“Sir,” she said, “If they have taken Him away, tell me where they have laid Him.”

Her only thoughts were to see Him just once again. She did not look up while she waited for an answer, her eyes were too full of tears. But she heard:

“Mary!”

She startled at her name for it came clearly from the lips of Him who had spoken it often before. The voice was only a little softer.

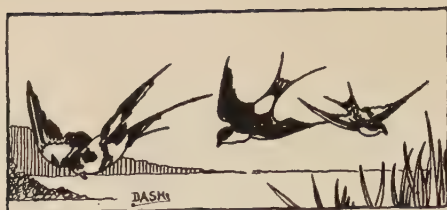
The head that had dropped so wearily was raised. She knew Him. The old grief made way for the new joy. Her memory was awakened by a sudden strong power. She remembered:

“I shall go, but in three days I shall come back to you.”

“Jesus,” she cried, joy springing wildly into her heart. Her Master had come back to her.

All the gray gloom turned to sunshine. Every nook and corner in the sweet old garden now awoke to the joy. The birds sang their most beautiful songs for this was the first glad Easter morning.





The Message

IT was a wonderful thing that happened this day. All Jesus' favorites were hurrying to Jerusalem for Jesus had told them to come. He had asked that they all be there for He had something wonderful to tell them. They must have wondered what it was, and when they were all gathered, many curious faces looked on.

And suddenly as they looked there came something—something strange. It was still a long way off. If it had not been midday, they would have thought it was the sun just coming up. Now as it drew nearer they saw.

Into their midst Jesus came, looking beautiful



But like those of an Angel.

and peaceful. He had changed so much. Yet they could all still see His old love and sympathy shining.

When He spoke, the words were not those of a man, but like those of an angel. His eyes shone with glory.

“Though you will see me no more,” He said, “I will be with you always, even to the end of the world. Go then and teach my people what I have taught you.”

He talked to them a long time about the work He wanted them to do. Many times He had charmed those who came to listen but never as He charmed them today. It was God speaking, they knew. He promised that wherever they would go, into the heathen lands, the busy city, the desert, in poverty or pain, He would always be with them.

Being told all that, it seemed to help make them ready for what was to follow.

A strange feeling came over them, as if a holy spirit had settled on them. Jesus had ceased



To the Land of the Blessed.

to speak and as they waited silently, they saw Him rise up as if by unseen wings, radiant and joyful. Up, up, up over the gray olive trees, far above them. Higher and higher and through the sunlight. They strained their eyes to follow but a cloud, like a bundle of white wool, came and covered Him. He had gone where there was neither cold nor hunger nor care, to the land of the blessed. They had seen Him for the last time.

Slowly His words came to them:

“Just as I go to my Father in Heaven, I shall come back to you.”

That was all they had to look forward to now and in the meantime they would work. Oh! how they would work for their beloved Master till He came again.

FINIS



